THE ENGLISH NVNNE.

BEING

A Treatiſe, wherein (by way of Dialogue) the Author endeauoureth to draw yong & vnmarried Catholike Gentlewomen to imbrace a Votary, and Religious Life.

Written by N. N.

Heereunto is annexed a ſhort Diſcourſe (by way of Concluſion) to the Abbeſſes, and Religious women of all the Engliſh Monaſteries in the *Low-Countreys*, and *France*.

Enter you by the narrow Gate (*meaning of Auſterity*) that leadeth vnto Life: becauſe large is the Way that leadeth to Perdition. *Matth.* 7.

Preſent your ſelfe a chaſt Virgin vnto Chriſt. 2. Cor. 11.

Permiſſu Superiorum. M. DC. XLII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY:

To the young, and vnmaried Catholike Gentlewomen of England.

WORTHY, *and vertuous young Gentlewomen*: My Penne for your ſpirituall good, is willing in theſe enſuing leaues, to ſpread it ſelfe. You are all *Catholikes* in Fayth and profeſſion, and therefore the more apt to receaue (if ſo Gods Grace be not wanting) the impreſſion of the Aduice & Coũſel, which in this *Treatiſe* is giuen. My mayne proiect at this preſent

ſent is, ſince you all (to whom I wryte) as yet remayne in your Chaſt and Virginall ſtate, & free from Mariage, to perſwade you (what in me lyeth) to abandone this Wicked World, and to imbrace a Votary and Religious life. A hard labour (no doubt) in your iudgments, but facile and eaſy to ſuch of you, who haue a feeling, & true apprehenſion of the ioyes of Heauen, and torments of Hell.

I do not ſpeake this, as if one in a maried ſtate could not arryue to Heauen, and auoyde Hell. Noe, God forbid; For I acknowledg with the Apoſtle, (a) *Mariage to be honourable*, but withall I hould Virginity to be *more honourable*. I here only propound the moſt ſecure way to come to Heauen, and eſcape Hell. And here I demand, if any of You were married, and after the death of your husbands,

(a) Heb. 13.

were

were to enioy a great, and rich loynture, of a thousand, or two thousand pounds yearely; would you not be desirous, that besydes the common Course of making loyntures (which perhaps might be subiect to some danger) to take (by your learned Counsell) the best meanes for the ratifying and better securing of your Right to your said loynture? I know, you would be most solicitous herein.

You all pretend Title to the kingdome of Heauen; a kingdom infinitly surpassing in worth, all worldly loiintures that the whole Earth can affoard; and will you then content your selues to seeke by the common, and ordinary Course of a *Secular lyfe*, to obtaine this kingdome (in which state, as I grant, many liuing haue gayned it, so incōparably far many more haue lost it;) but that rather you

wil enter into that Vocation (how ſeuere, how ſtrict, how croſſe ſoeuer to flesh and bloud it shall ſeeme) which may giue you greater aſſurance, and more ſtrengthen your Intereſt, and Title to that moſt Bleſſed Kingdome?

This Treatiſe I haue compoſed in forme of a feigned *Dialogue*, as hoping that thereby you will be ſooner induced to the reading and peruſing it at full; then if it were written in one long continued ſpeach, without any viciſſitude, or change of Perſons.

In the Perſons here feigned by ſuppoſall, I haue thought good to incorporate all the Reaſons (as deliuered by them) chiefly moouing to a *Religious* & retired Life, as alſo ſuch obiections, as commonly are made againſt that moſt happy Courſe; as you may be more fully inſtructed by peruſing

he Argument, or ſubiect hereof next following.

And ſeing the chiefeſt barre, & ct in women to a *Monaſticall lyfe*, is *deſire of Mariage*, & *hope of children*; I will (beſides what is treated ther- of hereafter) inſiſt heere a little, diſcouering the inſufficiency of this Motiue; ſhewing that the ac- cuſtomed miſeries of a married lyfe, and of hauing iſſue, ought much rather to ſway with women, for their forbearãce of Marriage.

And firſt, whereas *Lyfe* is the deareſt thing to man or woman; yet we find, that beſides the cer- taine great paines of Child-birth, *Lyfe* it ſelfe in young married wo- men, is for the moſt part, euery one, or two yeares greatly endan- gered to be loſt: witneſſe heereof is the daily experience of women dying in Childbed.

What true deſire then can a wo-

man haue to vndertak that course of life, wherein lyeth so great a perill of loosing that (I meane her *Lyfe*,) which is most deare vnto her; and that her body thereby shall, before its prefixed tyme by God, become meate for wormes?

Yf any one of you had a *Iewell* set with rich and Orient pearle, valewed at some hundreds of pounds, how carefull would you be in keeping of it? & how would your care be doubled from endangering the losse of it, at any tyme? And yet only for the enioying of a litle momentary pleasure (attended after with multitude of miseries) you can be content so often to hazard the losse of your *owne lyfe*, the most precious Iewell, that God & Nature hath bestowed vpon you in this world. O fondnes of Iudgment!

But to proceed. Admit, that a woman

woman in bringing forth her Children, should be freed from all danger of death; yet to how many other insupportable afflictions doth she become thrall, & lye open? For we obserue (and this not seldome) that the Husband becomes vnkind, withdrawing his loue and affection, from whence it is due, & placing it on otherswhere it is not due. Againe, the Husband (I meane, no few number of them) doth oftentimes dissipate and waste his Estate and Patrimony in sensuality and riot, to the vtter ouerthrow or beggary (in the end) of Himselfe, his Wyfe, and Children.

But suppose, the Husband be exempt from these disorders; yet if the wyfe haue many Children, falleth it not often out, that the children through the negligence of their Father, are brought vp in

all liberty and dissolution, to the inconsolable griefe of the poore Gentlewoman their Mother, & to the eternall Damnation of the Childrens soules? And what comfort then can that womā haue, to be an instrumēt of bringing forth that Child, who shall become for euer, an Heyre of Hell-fyre?

O how many wyues are there in *England*, who find by ouer late, & too dearely bought experiēce, all this to be true, which I here affirme, of the frequent dangers, griefes, and affiictions of mynd commonly accompanying Marriage? From all which languors of spirit, that woman deliuereth herselfe, who forbearing marriage doth determine to leade a Religious lyfe.

In proofe of the Truth here said, I appeale euen to the certain knowledg of diuers of your sel-

es, who, if you will but caſt your
res vpon ſome of your owne
yndred, and friends, (at leaſt of
our acquaintance, that liue in
ate of mariage) muſt needs con-
ſſe that all, or diuers of the a-
ore mentioned miſeries and ca-
mities, do daily oppreſſe many
f them. You are yet free; beware
hen of ſuch dangers. Nor will
any further enlarge my ſelfe in
his place vpon this Subiect, but
ill refer you to the ſerious peru-
ll of the *Booke* it ſelfe.

Yf this Diſcourſe were a ſe-
ond *Syr Philip Sidneys Arcadia*,
reating of amourous Conceyts;
with what a greedines would ma-
y of you read it? Cõdemne then
our owne want of ſpirituall fer-
uour in ſuch of you, as but only
vouchſafe to caſt a curious eye
here & there vpon theſe leaues;
& yet it may be in part ſaid, that

this

this Booke in general discourseth of the same subiect, of which the *Arcadia* doth; to wit of *Loue*. But the *Arcadia*, of sensuall and vaine *Loue*, attended on with sinne, and Repentance; This, of chaste, and *holy Loue*, whereby a *Soule* by solemne vow espouseth herselfe to *Christ* her Bridegroome: so verifying those words of the Apostle, *Presents* (b) *you a chaste Virgin vnto Christ*.

(b) 2. Cor. 11.

I only wish, that what *Cosmophila* (a feigned young Gentlewoman in this *Dialogue*) is supposed to do, you really, and truly would act her *Sceene*, in your proceedings: So might you by a mortifyed lyfe, not only auoyd all spirituall dangers both of soule and body, but infallibly purchase to your selues, an eternall Crowne of Glory.

Yf any of you reape such pro-

fit

by this my Labour, as by the eading heereof, to shake hands or euer with the vanities of the orld, and happily to Cloyſter our ſelfes in ſome deuout *Mona-ery*; how fully should I thinke ny paynes to be recompenſed erein? And with this I ceaſe, in-reating your remembrance of e (only for my intention at aſt, and endeauour of adwan-ng your ſpirituall good) at the eſt tymes of your deuotions.

Yours in all Chriſtian Charity.

N. N.

The

The Explication of certaine Greeke Nam
vsed in this Treatise.

Calia, A woman exercising a Heaue
lyfe.

Cosmophila, A woman, that loueth
World.

Christophila, A woman deuoting her l
to Christ.

Monadelphus, One only Brother.

Orthodoxus, A man professing the
Fayth.

Gynecia, Womanhood.

Belgiopolis, A Citty in *Belgium*, or
Low-Countreyes.

The Argument, or Subiect of the ensuing Dialogue.

Orthodoxus, an imaginary Catholike Knight in *England*, and of a great State, hath three Children by his Lady *Gynecia*; two Daughters, & one Sonne: The elder daughter is called *Celia*; the younger *Cosmophila*; His sonne *Monadelphus*. *Celia* is permitted with consent of her parents, to become *Religious*, and accordingly is sent ouer vnto an English Monastery of Nunnes, in *Belgiopolis*.

Whiles she is in her *Nouiship*, or yeare of *Probation*, her Brother *Monadelphus* dyeth. Hereupon *Orthodoxus* writeth to *Celia* (since as yet she was not professed) to returne backe, because (for want of Heyres Male) he was determined to dispose of both his daughters in Mariage, and to deuide (after his death) his State betweene them.

He receaueth no answere from *Celia*. In the end, *Orthodoxus* is forced to send his yonger daughter *Cosmophila* to *Celia*, to perswade her returne. *Cosmophila*, as being fully instructed by her Father, (who furnished her with diuers Obiections, commonly made against a *Religious* lyfe) was most earnest with her *Sister* to satisfy their parents desire; and this in the presence of the *Confessarius*, and *Abbesse* of that Monastery.

Celia remayneth constant and immoueable in her pious Resolution. The *Confessarius* learnedly displayeth the weakenes and insufficiency of all those Reasons and Arguments which *Cosmophila* brought. That done, he beginneth to discourse in a most full man-

ner

ner of the Dignity, Worth, Excellency, Priuiledges, & Benefits of a *Monasticall Life*.

His Speaches, by little and little, did so strongly worke with *Cosmophila*, as that she fully repenting her of former perswasions to her *Sister*, wholy altereth her iudgment; is resolued to lead the same Religious life with *Celia*; taketh the *Habit* of the Monastery; beginneth her *Nouiship*, and changeth her former name into *Christophila*.

The two daughters wryte a ioynt letter to their parents, acquainting them with what hath fallen out. They withal intreat the *Confessarius* to wryte (with theirs) his owne letter to *Orthodoxus* and his *Lady*. He agreeth to their request.

Their parents receauing these Letters, were at the first much agrieued. But within some small tyme after, partly by force of the said Letters, but chiefly seeing they saw it was Gods will and Ordination, that their only sone should dye, both their daughters should become Religious, & that they should (as being hopelesse of more issue) leaue no Heyre Male of their owne bodies behind them, they humbly submit themselues to Gods good pleasure therein.

They do so repentingly acknowledg their former Errour in dehorting of *Celia*, as that both being well stroke in yeares, they resolue for satisfaction of that fault, to liue no lōger togeather as man and wyfe; but to spend the rest of their life in a *Religious Course*. Hereupon *Orthodoxus* acquainteth the *Confessarius* by Letter, that he intendeth to enter into some Religious *Hause* of the *Capuchins*; and *Gynecia* into the *Monastery*, where her two daughters do remaine.

THE

THE DIALOGVE.

COSMOPHILA being sent ouer into the *Low-Countreyes*, by her Father *Orthodoxus* (as is before declared) with instruction, and order to bring backe her sister *Cæcia* into England; and now safely arriued at *Belgiopolis*, meeting with a Reuerend Man in the street, courteously saluteth him in this manner.

Cosmophila.

Reuerend Syr, God saue you. It seemes by your habit, that you are a Clergy-man, and so in likelyhood the better able to satisfy my demand. I am a Stranger, and an English woman, and but at this very houre arriued, with my Seruants, to this Noble City of *Belgiopolis*. My desire is, that you would be pleased to direct me, vnto the Monastery of the *English Nunnes* in this Towne.

The Confessarius.

Gentlewoman (and it should appeare by yo attendance, of Worthy State and Condition I will not only satisfy your request, but wi my selfe conduct you to the Monastery: for am the *Confessarius* to the Religious and ver tuous women of that House. Therefore, if please you, let vs go togeather, for it is clo by. This is the Monastery. Come in, and re your selfe a while in this roome, till I sha send for the Lady Abbesse vnto the Grate t speake with you, and entertaine you accor ding to your worth. And loe, where she ap proacheth.

The Abbesse.

Is there any one here, who would speak with me?

Confessarius.

Yes *Madame*: For as I was passing through the Streets, I ouertooke this worthy Gentle woman, a stranger, and *English* (as she sayth by birth. She desired me, to shew her this Re ligious house; but what the cause of her com ming hither is, or why she is desirous to see this house, I know not. Noe doubt she will acquaint your Ladyshippe with her Moti ues thereof.

Gentle

Abbesse.

Gentlewoman: Are you the party, that would speake with me? Yf it please you then, you may relate your busines.

Cosmophila.

I am. And herewith I am to make knowne vnto you, that I haue a Sister in this your house, called *Celia*, whom I would gladly see; And to her I shall impart all the particulars of my long, and tedious iourney.

Abbesse.

I will send for her, to come vnto you presently. And heere she commeth: Sister *Celia*, know you this *English Gentlewoman* who you see on the other syde of the Grate? She sayth, she knoweth you.

Celia.

O God! It is my Sister *Cosmophila* (for we both had one Father and Mother:) deare *Sister*, how do you? How do our parents? Are they in health?

Cosmophyla.

Most louing Sister, how glad am I to see you? Our parents are in good health of body;

But our only good Brother *Monadelphus* (for you know we had but one, and therefore we were vsually for many yeares accustomed so to call him,) since your departure out of *England*, is dead, (to the inconsolable griefe of my Father and Mother,) though I trust, he liue with Christ Iesus in Heauen. And his death is the only occasion, why my Father hath sent me vnto you: With the cause wherof, seeing this *Religious Lady* is in the end to be acquainted, I thinke it conuenient to declare it in her presence, though from others I would haue the matter concealed. But mult in the meane tyme, this vnkind, or rather enuious Irongrate (through which I only yet but see you) must it (I say) barre vs from mutually imbracing one another, now after my wearisome iourney, of so many miles, both by sea and land?

Abbesse.

Mistresse, it shall not: you shall haue free accesse to come in, to speake, & conuerse with your *Sister*: Our house is not of that seuere disposition, as to forbid that familiar consolation of Sisters, which euen Nature, and all morall Ciuility warranteth. Neuertheless you do prudently, to acquaint me with any priuate busines, which may passe betweene you and your Sister, for it is the custome of our house (as also of other Monasteryes) that no particular discourse of moment shall passe betweene any of our *Sisters*, and Strangers

(how

(how neere soeuer they be in kindred) without the priuity of the *Abbesse*, or of some other appointed by her order. Therefore come with me, I will take you into a very red place, where not any shall be present, but this our Reuerend *Father Confessarius* (to whome is ordinarily made knowne the greatest busines of our house) my selfe, you, and your *Sister Celia*. Well: Now heere you are; You may freely impart the occasion of your comming, to your *Sister*, and so to vs both.

Cosmophila.

Well then *Good Sister*, let me first salute & imbrace you. Now touching the busines, this it is: Take notice, that, as I haue aboue tould you, our only *Brother* is dead; In regard hereof my *Father* hearing, that as yet you haue not made any Vow of a Religious lyfe, nor yet in conscience stand obliged to any such spirituall course, you being only in your *Nouiceship*; He is desirous therefore, that you returne presently into *England* with me; for his meaning is (through want of heyres-Male,) to deuyde his liuing betweene vs, which, to speake sparingly, is two thousand pounds yearely; himselfe as you know well, being a knight (if so I may deliuer it with modesty) of good place and ranke. He wrote to you some moneths since about this busines, but it seemes his letters did miscarry; and therefore he was the more willing to send me vnto you, to perswade you to satisfy herein his iust

desire: Therefore seeing we are *Sisters* in Nature, I hope you will beare to my speaches a Sisterly, and listing eare. And since you are the elder Sister, my Father commanded me to tell you, that vpon your mariage, he will bequeath to you at his death the better part, or moity of his state and liuing. This is the Tenour of my message, and it is warranted with such strong Reasons and Motiues, as that I cannot be perswaded, but that you will conforme your selfe to our Father herein with all promptitude and readines of Resolution; and that you will within few dayes prepare your selfe for your returne with me into *England*.

Calia.

O deare Sister, you could not haue brought me a more distastfull and vnpleasing message, then this: I am most sorry that our Brother is dead (and yet we all must once dye,) but that his death should be the occasion of my forsaking my intended (and now entred into) course of life, I infinitly loath. Therefore O most mercifull *Redeemer Iesus Christ* (to whom I am allready deuoted in soule, neuer to espouse any but thy selfe) heere vpon my knees, I most humbly beseech thee, euen by the force of thy bitter passion, so to strengthen & fortify the weakenes of my Sex with thy alouercomming grace, as that neither the ghostly Enemy of mans Soule, nor any temporary or vayne Allectiues, or Motiues may be of strength to worke so vpon my iudgment, as euer

euer to beare me from the *station* of my present Resolution, to imbrace a *Monasticall* & votary lyfe. O Good God, of whom it is said, *That thou* (a) *chooseſt the weake to confound the ſtrong*; arme my imbecillity with thy ſuccurrency and help, to ſubdue all aſſaults, which either the Enemy, or the World ſhall be able to plant againſt me. (a) *Pſal.*

Abbeſſe.

Ryſe vp deare *Siſter Celia*, you haue ſpoken well; and I aſſure my ſelfe, God will not be wanting with his grace towards you. For he neuer forſaketh that party, who putteth his truſt in him: for we read: (b) *God is a tower of ſtrength from the face of the Enemy.* (b) *Pſal.* 60.

Coſmophila.

What *Siſter*? Muſt this be the meſſage, the which I muſt returne from you to your Father? Where then is your obedience to your parents? It ſeemes it is wanting; & yet I haue heard learned Clarks ſay, that (*) *Obedience is better then Sacrifice.* Can it be an effect of a Religious lyfe, to caſt of that duty to our parets, which the Religion of God commandeth vs euer to beare? Is it not one of the precepts, impoſed vpon vs by God himſelfe: *Honour* (* *thy Father and Mother, that thy dayes may be long vpon earth*? Therefore good *Siſter*, recall your ſelfe, and caſt an eye of introuerſion vpon your owne actions. And let both you and me euen (*) 1. *Kings* c. 15. (*) *Exod.* 20.

meditate (according to our Fathers desire) of *Husbands* (of *Husbands* I say) the very sound of which word is so gratefull to our sex. And let vs both remember, that since we are borne to liue in this world, we are for the tyme to be louers of the world, and to be partakers of the Honours therof; as to haue our Coaches, our Attendance, braue and rich Apparell, to liue at *London*, and the lyke.

Calia.

O how do your words wound my poore hart with griefe! And why do you cast an aspertion of disobedience vpon me? I honour my Father, and Mother; yet I honour my *Sweet Iesus* more. My *Father* gaue a being to my body in this world; *God* is the supreme Agent, giuing a creation both of my soule and body: My *Father* intreats, but *God* out of his irresistable power, commands: My *Father* promiseth temporall lands, and preferment; *God* promiseth me an eternall & heauenly Kingdome: Briefly, my *Father* hath maintained me being once borne, with necessaries to my lyfe: *God* (being borne) hath redeemed me (being borne) with the effusion of his most pretious bloud, and euer since hath fed and nourished my soule with the celestiall iuyce of his Grace-bringing Sacraments: Why then should my Soule be so trayterous to his diuine Maiesty, and so hurtfull to it selfe, as to preferre a temporall Father, before a diuine Father? Noe: For in this sense my carnall Father

ther ceaseth to be my Father; and heere are fulfilled those words of our Sauiour: *Call no man Father vpon earth; for one is your Father, which is in Heauen.* Now, as for your sensuall allurements of a *Husband*, of *Coaches*, *rich apparell*, and such like vaine toyes (for the loue I beare to my deare *Redeemer*) I contemne them all. (c) *Math.* 23.

Cosmophila.

Well *Sister*, I grieue to find you so strongly enthralled to your owne Iudgment: Therfore the more easely to reclayme you from your settled *Obstinacy* (pardon me for vsing towards you so vnkind a word,) I will be content, you shall continue in this your Resolution, if so I cannot giue you sufficient Reasons for your alteration thereof: Only I expect, that force of Reason (once being discerned) may take place in your Soule, and that it may be of strength to voyd it of all partiality of Iudgment. Therefore, *Sister*, you must call to mynd, that it was first your extraordinary and impatient desire of taking this your intended course, which extorted (and as it were wrunge out) a consent from my Father and Mother, for your comming into these parts. For I haue often heard my Father talk of the dangerous state of a Religious life; and how it is beset with many difficulties; though the state of Religion, as it is meerely considered in it selfe, and abstracted from those difficulties, he euer (as being a Catholike)

like) did much approue and reuerence: Therefore I will make bold, with the good licence of your *Lady Abbesse*, and *Confessarius* heere to relate to you (so far as my weake memory will serue) diuers of my Fathers speaches, as he discoursed often with my Mother, touching this subiect.

Abbesse.

We giue you free liberty therein, hoping that our *Father Confessarius* will lay open and display the weaknes of all your Reasons and Motiues impugning a Religious life; which point being once performed, will much ratify your *Sisters* already imbraced Resolution: and truly I partly feare by your ouertures and secret dislike of a retired course of life that those words vsed by our *Sauiour* in the Gospell *to the two Sisters* (so a woman may without ouermuch boldnes, alledge passages of Scripture) may in part be verified of you and your Sister: *Martha, Martha,* (*) *sollicita es erga plurima, Maria optimam partem elegit quæ non auferetur ab ea. Cosmophila, Cosmophila*, you labour much about these worldly aduancements; but your sister *Celia* hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken from her.

(*) *Luc. 10.*

Cosmophila.

Well then. My Father (who you know was a Schollar, and was an Vniuersity man so many yeares) did much insist in the difficul-

ties and austerities necessarily accompanying a Religious lyfe; as *much fasting, much praying, rysing in the night, Obedience to the Superiour, Pouerty, perpetuall Chastity*, and the like; Things most aduerse to mans nature, and such, as they beget an horrour in the mynds both of men and women, from vndertaking so rigid a course of lyfe. To the vndergoing then of these vnsupportable burdens, you tye your selfe (good *Sister*) if so you prosecute your lately begun state: Therefore I hould it more secure both for your soule and body, rather to withdraw back your foote in tyme, then to goe on forward, and in the middest of your dangerous iourney to faint, and to say secretly to your soule: *O that I had not entred into this thorny way of Religion, but had liued a good Catholike in England.*

Confessarius.

Women out of their want of reading, and especially young Nouices (such as our Sister *Celia* is) are perhaps not able to solue all the obiected Arguments, made by sensuall men against a votary lyfe: Therefore I being the *Confessarius* to this vertuous Monastery, hould it my duty and function, to refute all such vained Reasons. To this then your first obiection I say; I yield, that the votary lyfe hath its difficulties, but these difficulties proceed not from the nature of the lyfe it selfe; but our owne corrupt flesh, not subiecting it selfe to Reason, is the cause of them. For certaine

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it is, since a strict seruice of God, is sortable t
Reason, that therefore this seruice is pleasin
to a Man of *Reason*: I further answere, th
there are two things, which much sweete
the paynes of a Religious lyfe. First & prin
cipally, the *Merit* thereof, the subiect of whic
Merit is, the enioying the eternall felicity
Heauen. So true is that saying in Scriptur
(d) *The Passions of this tyme, are not worthy of t*
glory to come, which shalbe reuealed vnto vs. An
vpon this ground we read, that *S. Ignatius* t
Martyr had iust reason thus ioyfully to cr
out in these fiery words: (e) *Let fire the Cro*
deuouring Beasts, the cutting of my body asunder, t
breaking of my bones, the dissipation of all my mem
bers, the distraction of all my body; Yea, let all t
scourges and torments of the Deuill come vpon me,
that I obtaine Iesus Christ. But what are all th
afflictions incident to a Religious lyfe, to b
compared for the enioying of Christ, to the
Torments, so earnestly thirsted after by th
Blessed Martyr? Since these afflictions can h
but short, whereas the enioying of Christ
for euer; and certaine it is, that nothing (i
compare of Eternity) is long, which is me
sured with the yard of tyme.

(d) Rom. 8.

(e) Ignat. in Epist. ad Romanos.

The second thing, which much lessne
the apprehension and feeling of Monastica
austerities, is the *internall comfort*, and *consol*
tion, with which God doth oftentymes vi
his seruants, to make them more couragiou
hould out in their begun conflict. And th
in the sweetnes of this spirituall Wyne, tast
by the seruants of God, all the sowry acc
den

dents belonging to a Monasticall Lyfe, are wholy absorpt and drowned. Hence it is, that our Saviour sayth: (f) *My yoake is sweet, and my burthen light.* And God the Father thus (f) *Mat. 11.*
sollaceth a man for Iustice sake; (g) *I am with him in his tribulation* Finally, the Apostle out of (g) *Psal. 90.*
his experience in telling of Gods most comfortable hand in the throng of his troubles spent in the seruice of God, thus bursteth forth: (h) *I am replenished with Consolation, & do exceedingly abound in ioy, in all our tribulations.* (h) *2. Cor. 7.*
What say you now *Cosmophila*? Are the asperities of a religious Lyfe such, as they are not much sugred by God, for the better supporting and bearing of them? These passages and testimonies alledged by me, are the *Written Word* of God: Either they are true, or God in his holy Scripture (which God forbid, that any Christiã should so dreame) is false. But if it please you, you may passe to your next imaginary bug-beare (seruing only to affright Children) against a votary and virginall life.

Cosmophila.

Indeed (*Good Syr*) I cannot deny, but that these two spirituall Medicines (so to call them) are able much to alwage the paynes endured in Religion. But seeing it is your pleasure, I should proceed further in my Fathers former discourse of this Subiect, I will. The next point then, of which he would often speake is this; that if all men and women should become *Religious*, then the world would

would (contrary to Gods preordination therein) soone perish, and be brought to an vtter dissolution; and that ech Gentleman's particular house and family should instantly decay; since by this meanes the expectation of all posterity (marriage, and conuersation betweene mā & woman being wholy taken away) would presently fayle.

Confessarius.

It seemes by this Obiection, that your Father is a Schollar (as you said aboue,) and hath borrowed it out of the writings of *S. Austin*; who relating this very reason to be much vrged by certaine ancient Heretiks in disproofe of a Religious lyfe, doth answere the Argument in these particular words: (i) *Would to God, all men would do so* (to wit, that men and women would liue a single, chast, and vnmaryed lyfe) *then the Citty of God would be sooner filled, and the end of the world would hasten on.* Which answere is most warrantable; since it were far better, that the Kingdome of God should presently come (which we daily beg in our *Pater noster*, and haue beene taught to beg the same by our Saniour himselfe) then to produce & draw out our dayes in this vncertainty and confusion of dangers. Though this answere be very sufficient, yet *S. Ierome* giueth another solution hereto no lesse forcible, in this manner; *Feare not, lest all be Virgins;* (k) *Virginity is a hard thing, and therefore rare, because it is hard*; Which answere taketh its strength

(i) *Augustin. de bono coniug. c. 10.*

(k) *Ierom. lib. 1. contra Iouinianum.*

ſtrength from that ſentence of *Chriſt* deliuered of Virginity: (l) *Not all receaue this word.*

(l) *Matth.19.*

Now, whereas ſome may boldly reply (which perhaps, *Coſmophila*, you in modeſty and baſhfulnes forbeare to doe) that the diſparity of ſex, and the faculties of generation would be but fruitles, and in vayne, in ſuch perſons who will not marry, and vſe the act of generation; and that hereupon, it might ſeeme to follow, *that God, and Nature* ſhould worke in vayne (which were moſt impious and abſurd to maintayne) in giuing both the Sexes thoſe different faculties for generation, and yet for them to make no vſe thereof. But to this I anſwere, that what is inſtituted herein, is not inſtituted idly, and in vayne; though in ſome particulars in that kind, it hath not its proper effect, ſo that in other particulars it haue. For who obſerueth not, that in all kind of fruits and hearbs, commeth a great quantity of ſeed, which is neuer ſowne, and that but a ſmall part thereof is vſed to that end; and yet we cannot accuſe Nature, as if ſhe had made it in vayne, or erred therein?

Now touching the decay of particular ancient Howſes and families, whoſe abſolute diſſolution and extinguiſhment the forbeare of Mariage doth threaten; which moue I preſume preuayles ouermuch (*Coſmophila*) with your Father: Let vs ſtir the ground a little, about this reaſon, and obſerue how weake, and vnworthy it is. True it is, that the caſe of an only heyre is in ſome moderate part to be apprehended, and bewayled. But

here

here I demand, whether the Sanctity of a Soule doth not incomparably exceed the benefit of Posterity? Now these men (so much prizing posterity) need not to feare the want of an heyre; For who is he, that hath not many of his Kindred, though perhaps not many of his name? Which point is only a poore priuiledg resting in a sound of few letters. And if he hath not any of his name, nor of his kindred; Yet there are many poore and distressed people in the world, among whom to distribute his state, is to make in them, *Christ* his heyre, and this with most happy conditions: For one man, that is heyre to another, cannot recompence the kindnes of the party, being dead; But Christ doth at that tyme remunerate, or repay a man (making him his heyre) with an eternall reward.

Againe, it is not certaine (as it falleth out in your Fathers Case) that the only heyre remayning, shall liue, and haue issue. And if this should so fortune, yet shall the lyne and succession at last fayle and cease, & this (which is to be deplored) without thanks, or reward. The truth of which point experience daily assureth vs; since how many ancient houses & families in our owne Country of *England*, haue within these last forty yeares, come to vtter desolation and ruyne; the very names of such families, being oftentymes wholy extinct, and buried in forgetfulnes? Vpon this point did *S. Ierome* much insist, when he perswaded *Furia* from marriage, thus speaking: (m) *Dost thou feare, the lyne of Furia should fayle*

(m) S. *Ierome in Epist.* 10.

yle, and that thy Father shall not haue a little one f thee to creepe into his breast. Feare not, for all that ie maried, haue not Children. It is a great ouersight hope for certaine, that which thou seest many haue t; and many loose it, when they haue it. To whom hen do I counsell thee to leaue all thy riches? To hrist, who can not dye. What heyre by thus doing shalt hou haue? Him, who is thy Lord and Sauiour. Thus r S. Ierome of this point. But to passe further in his Subiect, since it not only much swayeth with your Father, but with most worldlings, hough otherwise in fayth and lyfe they be Catholikes.

Let vs ballance a little the succesſe to preue a mans family, with the happines of a religious lyfe. Well then, it is ordayned by God, hat not only particular man, but whole fa-ilies shall once dye, though they continue any yeares for the tyme, and thus in the end ey are wholy brought to nothing. Therefore what stupidity and dulnes of iudgment is it in man, so to feed himselfe with hope, for euer continue his house and family with new spring, and so much to couet the same, as to ppose himselfe to the Counsell, and contrary termination of God therein, and thereupon labour (what in him lyeth) to preuent and inder Gods ordinance?

I will close vp our discourse touching your bjection, with this passage following: To it, that this thirsting and insatiable desire of ontinuing a descent in bloud, is most vn-orthy a Christian, and rather more sorting a Heathen or Infidell. And the zeale of euen

(n) Aristotiles l. 1. Polit. c. 1.

according to (n) Philosophy is this: Beasts a[illegible] men haue a desire ingrafted by nature to pe[illegible] petuate themselues, or for euer to prolon[illegible] their being; because all things desire to be a[illegible] wayes, and alwayes to continue: But where[illegible] this so much coueted continuance cannot [illegible] effected by themselues, since they are all su[illegible] iect to death; they therefore labour to com[illegible] passe, and obtaine it at least in their ow[illegible] kind, in which they seeme (after a certai[illegible] manner and degree) to liue, so long as a[illegible] branch descending from them, doth liue. No[illegible] here I demand, what force hath this Reason [illegible] the Philosopher in the light of *Christianity*, sin[illegible] Christian Religion assureth vs of a most ce[illegible] taine and infallible promise of Eternity [illegible] our owne persons, both in body and Soule? therefore we neede not to seeke to obtai[illegible] that in others, which we shall haue in our se[illegible] ues. And thus far touching the weaknes of th[illegible] so common, and so much pretended difficu[illegible] ty, *That a Religious Course is a hindrance to the co[illegible] tinuance of the world, and the preseruation of wh[illegible] Howses and Descents.* But (good *Cosmophila*) y[illegible] may (if it please you) come to other reason[illegible] obiected by your Father against a Votary li[illegible]

Cosmophila.

It was vrged by my Father, that such [illegible] professe a votary life, (whether men, or w[illegible] men) do much lye open to seuerall dreadf[illegible] temptations, as apprehending ouer greatly t[illegible] seuerity of that lyfe, or the feare of abandonin[illegible]

the

their vndertaken Course; thus hauing a conflict in themselues in resisting their owne euer molesting passions; from which, such persons as liue in the world, are most exempt & free. Yea, the *Religious* are so assluted to vndergoe these spirituall Conflicts and temptations (& oftentimes also be ouercome by them) as that I well remember, that my Father would alledge in proofe thereof these ensuing words of the Scripture: (o) *Sonne, comming to the seruice of God, stand in feare and trembling, and prepare thy soule for temptation.* Now, what a dying lyfe is this, for one to draw out his dayes in this spirituall warre, and combat of Temptations, when a man must at euery instant be ready to resist the forcible assaults of his Enemy? Or what repose or ioy can any haue thus liuing, or rather (to speake lyfe it can hardly be called) but thus breathing?

(o) *Eccles. c. 2.*

Confessarius.

It is a lamentable thing to obserue, how ready men are to detort the sacred word of God, for patronizing of their owne pusillanimity and weakenes, in going forward in Christs seruice. True it is, that Gods holy writ doth in the former words premonish the pious to expect Temptations, But withall we are to obserue, that the Scripture doth not counsell vs to auoyde and decline a more holy lyfe, by reason of these Temptations; but forewarneth vs to be ready, and expect in resisting of the said Temptations, with the weapons aboue

named; to wit, *Feare* and *Trembling*. The soul-diers of this world do not for any feare forbeare to fight in their Princes behalfe, but rather seeke to encounter their Enemy: Shall then a Soule thirsting after its owne saluation, forbeare the best meanes of obtayning it, for feare of the Temptations, which the spirituall Enemy (the deuill I meane) shall suggest against it?

To proceed further: Certaine it is, that women liuing in the world, are more thrall to Temptations, then Religious women. For secular persons lye open to euery bayte, and temptation, which either the deuill, or the outward senses present vnto them; they euer conuersing, and traficking (as it were) in temporall and worldly affayres. Now, Religious women are freed from all outward occasions, and allurements of Temptations; Since there is a continuall watch, and ward kept ouer them. For their outward Senses (as their eares, and eyes, and the rest) are barred and restrayned from all such dangerous obiects, as may occasion temptation. Againe, their Institution, Orders of their House, Obedience to their Superiours; yea the very wals themselues within which they are inclosed, do guard them from all such dangerous and spirituall incursions. And which is infinitly more then all this; God hath obliged himself to minister meanes, (and principally his grace) to his Seruants for ouercomming all Temptations, suffered for his sake: for these are the Apostles most cheerefull words: (p) *God is faythfull, who will not suffer*

(p) 1. Cor. 10.

you

you to be tempted aboue that, which you are able: but will make also with the temptation, a way to escape, that you may be able to sustayne.

I grant, it cannot be denied, but that Religious persons seeme in a vulgar eye to suffer more Temptations, then the Laity doth. And the reason hereof is this: Religious persons, when they are once resolued to liue a pious & retired lyfe, do instantly begin to cast their eye back vpon their former lesse vertuous Courses; and thereupon to see (so far as liberty is granted them) in what state their Soules stand in Gods sight, with intention to better their former careless proceedings. Now our ghostly Enemy not brooking this, as loath to loose that hold and interest, which he had in them, doth by all meanes cast before them temptations concerning a vertuous lyfe, therby more easely to withdraw them from prosecuting of the same. But to such of the Laity, as continue in the thraldome of the deuill, by their bad and impious liues, the deuill seemes to sleepe, (I meane) so long as they continue vnder his power and command, and this with good shew of Reason: For he houlds it better policy, to let them sleepe in their sinnes without affrighting them with any fearefull Temptations, then to disquiet them with such suggestions, they being allready in his power.

I will end this point of Temptations, vrged to fall out in a religious lyfe; whether these temptations haue reference to austerity in Religion, as to *Obedience, Chastity, Pouerty;* or whether otherwise the temptation concerne im-

mediatly either the Body or the Soule. And I will only say, that of my owne experience I haue knowne many young English Gentlewomen of very nyce Education, of weake constitution of body, and most deare to their parents, hauing once entred into a Religious and votary lyfe, haue most wonderfully ouercome all such temptations; euen betrampling vnder their feete all the stratagemes that the Deuill, the flesh, and the World could cast before them (as stumbling blocks) to hinder their allready vndertaken Course of vertue. But what was the Cause hereof? To wit, the hope of eternall Felicity, and because they disclaymed from their owne forces herein, & relied vpon Gods goodnes and prouidence, for the ouercoming of their temptations, and so verifying in themselues those words of Christ: *Sufficit* (q) *tibi gratia mea; my grace and assistance is sufficient to giue thee victory, ouer all thy Enemyes.* And why then may not our *Sister Celia* receaue in her Monasticall lyfe, the like fauours and indulgence from God, which he daily imparteth to others? O let not any exclude themselues from receauing the spirituall blessing of God, the which he, with so large and bountifull a hand communicateth to those, who endeauour to serue him in all purity of Soule and Body.

(q) 2. Cor. 12.

Cosmophila.

I grant, I cannot deny but that there are diuers Gentlewomen heretofore of my owne familiar

familiar acquaintance, who haue entred into Religion; whose tendernes of body and delicacy of breeding (I thought) could neuer haue brooked the daily austerities therein vsed. And therefore to confesse my priuate iudgment herein, I haue beene forced to ascribe this their ioyfull perseuerance to Gods peculiar care, & goodnes towards them.

But to goe forward in this our discourse; My Father would thus reason: The Commandements of God are inuiolable, and not dispensable: But one of the *Ten Commandements*, giuen to his people is: (*) *Thou shalt not kill.* (*) Exo. 20. Well then, thus would he dispute: Yt we be commanded by God not to kill one another; much more are we commanded not to kill our selues, since true it is, that a Homicide, who depriueth another man of his lyfe, is most hatefull in the sight of God; how execrable then is he in Gods Eye, who becommeth his owne butcher? But many such persons there are (said he) who through entring into a most strict & seuere order of a votary lyfe, do often by their great fastings, little sleepe, immoderate disciplines, and by other vnaccustomed rigidnes (if not immediatly kill, yet at least) shorten their owne dayes, and draw the period of their life, to a far narrower compasse, and number of yeares, then God otherwise hath ordained to them. Thus good Syr you see, that it may be auerred (at least with some shew of probability) that a Religious lyfe (so much aduanced by you, and entertayned by my *Sister*) may seeme to be prohibited, & forbidden by Gods owne hand-wryting.

Confessarius.

O how wanton and bold is Mans Nature to wrest and misconster Gods holy word, for the impugning of that course of life, which God himselfe first instituted! For how can it be, that the ten Commandements giuen by God to the Iewes, should forbid that state of life, which God after ordayned among the Iewes? But here I must make bold to charge your Father with want of reading: For it seemes he is ignorant, that among the Iewes (Gods chosen people) there were certaine Religious men, called *Essenes*, of whom *Iosephus* (the learned Iew) thus discourseth: (q) *The righteousnes of the Essenes is meruaylous; They enioy their riches in common; and in this course, aboue foure thousand men do liue, hauing neither wyues, nor seruants.* And further of them in another place: *They are Iewes by Nature*, (r) *and do obserue Continency, auoyde Mariage, are Contemners of riches.* With whom accordeth the learned *Philo* a Iew, (s) who speaks much of the same *Essenes*, of their Monasteries, and of their wonderfull fasting from Meate, saying of them: *Vix semel triduo cibi recordantur*: They scarce tast once of meate in the compasse of three dayes.

(q) Ioseph. antiq. Iudaic. l. 18. c. 2.

(r) Ioseph. l. 2. de bello Iudaic. c. 7.

(s) Philo de vita Contemplatiua.

But to answere this your Fathers Reason more particularly; First I say, that worldly people (who are not reprehended for so doing) do vndertake as great, or greater seueranties euen for temporall respects, as religious Women do for the gayning of Heauen. How many

many Tradesmen are there, who watch most part of the night in labour, and spare dyet, for getting of meanes to maintaine themselues & their charge, with poore meate and meane cloathes? How many Saylers & seamen, beaten with cold, thunder, and stormes, spend fewer howers in sleepe, then Religious persons do, and all for a little drosse and gaine? Briefly, how many *Lawyers* are there in *England*, who liuing far from *London*, do consume a good part of the yeare only in traueling vp and downe from their owne houses to the *Terme*, not regarding (like to ordinary Carties) any weather or foulenes of the way whatsoeuer? And when they come to the *Terme*, all the forenoone they bestow in going to *Westminster*, pleading (it is to be feared) sometymes an vniust cause: and all the afternoone they do shut themselues vp in a little closet, for their Clyents to resort vnto them; which sitting course for so many howers would be most paynefull to other men: and all this vassallage they vndergoe, for scraping together a little gold and siluer.

Yt then temporall men forbeare not such infinite drudgery, which in a common eye may seeme to shorten their dayes, and yet they are not to be charged for hastening of their death; why then shall Religious women for vndertaking lesser austerities for Gods sake & desire of gayning of Heauen, be reputed *Killers of themselues*, or guilty of their death? In this last place I say, that it is experimentally most certaine, that worldly men, who liue in all af-

fluency, and aboundance of riches and pleasures, do commonly liue fewer yeares, then Religious persons do. For such temporall men through Epicurisme, and delicacy of fare, or through intemperance in the sinnes of the flesh, do fill their bodies with crudities, raw humors, & diuers diseases attending the same, whereby their liues are sometimes shortned: Whereas Religious persons, through their spare dyet, moderate labour, and daily meditation of Heauenly matters, haue produced their liues to many yeares. According hereto (to insist in two or three particulars) we read, that *S. Antony* (the Hermit) liued a hundred and fiue yeares, *S. Ierome* who spent much of his tyme in the wildernes, liued a hundred yeares; and *S. Romualdus* also arriued to more then to a hundred yeares. So litle Reason there is, to charge a Religious course, with shortening the lyues of its Professours.

Abbesse.

I pray you, *Father Confessarius*, and you *Cosmophila*, giue me leaue to vrge one reason (as more fitting to be deliuered by a woman) to proue, that religious women are lesse subiect to shorten their liues, then other women who liue in the world; and this is *Childbirth*. How many women are there in the world (though otherwise of most strong, and healthfull constitution of Body) who haue in the compasse of a day, or two in the deliuerance of their children, lost their liues? This point is so euident,

dent, and daily subiect to our hearing, that it were lost labour to spend more words therein. Now, Religious women, who euer remaine shut vp in their Monasteries from the sight of men, are thereby exempted from this danger, by the which Lay-women do oftentimes come to a sudden and vnexpected death: and it may be perhaps your fortune (*Cosmophila*) after your marriage to shorten your lyfe by this meanes; whereas it is impossible, that your Sister *Celia*, continuing in her present Resolution, should thereby abbridge her dayes. But you may proceed (*Cosmophila*) in your other difficulties, and pretences against Religious women.

Cosmophila.

I partly acknowledg the weakenes of this my obiected Reason, for I discouer it for such, through the seuerall answeres aboue giuen thereto. But to prosecute my Fathers discourse of the former Subiect: He (more then once) would say, that one by imbracing a votary or Monasticall life, doth thereupon euen shake hands with the world, giuing it, its last *Adieu*; since he depriueth himself of all the pleasures, which the world affords. And thus such a man or woman ceaseth to be themselues, forbearing the ends for which in some sort they were created. For they disclayme from all Riches, Honours, Marriage, corporall pleasures, and other consolations, and comforts whatsoeuer, which the world daily affoardeth to others.

And

And this indeed I hould to be the greateſt hinderance of all others, for entring into that retired courſe of life, whereunto you (*Reuerend Syr*) do ſo much perſuade.

Confeſſarius.

I am of your mynd (*Coſmophils*) that this is the mayneſt obſtacle of all others in this kind; yet I thinke it may be remoued & taken away with as much facility (or more) then any other of your obiected Reaſons. And firſt, I diſcouer the weakenes thereof, by laying downe the frequent Teſtimonies of Gods holy Writ, which proclayme the *world* to be an vtter Enemy to mans ſaluation; and therupon do moſt forcibly dehort men from the loue of the world, and from the pleaſures thereof. Now who is ſo careleſſe, or deſperate of his Saluation, that will contract an inuiolable, or ſtraite entercourſe of friendſhip with his fatall & deſigned Enemy? And to begin: Doe not we find S. *Paul* thus to pronounce: (t) *The wiſdome of this world is foolishnes before God*? In like manner S. *Iames* aſſenteth therto in theſe words: (u) *Know you not, that the friendship of this world is an Enemy to God? Who therefore will be a friend of this world, is made an Enemy of God.* S. Iohn ſayth: (x) *Loue not the world; if any man loue the world, the Charity of the Father is not in him.* And againe: *The whole* (y) *world is ſet in wickednes.* To come to S. *Peter*, who thus teacheth of this point: (z) *Flye the corruption of the Concupiſcence, which is in the world.*

(t) 1. Cor 3.
(u) Iac. 4.
(x) 1. Iohn 2.
(y) 1. Iohn 2.
(z) 2. Petr. 1.

Now, if the teſtimonies of *Chriſt* his Apoſtles

ſles ſhould be little preuayling with you, I will cloſe this point, with the ſacred words of *Chriſt* himſelfe, thus ſpeaking to the Phariſyes, and Iewes: (a) *You are of this world; I am not of this world*; thus excluding himſelfe from the world, as a profeſſed Enemy thereof. Yea our *Bleſſed Saviour* proceedeth in words further againſt the *world*, thus ſpeaking in his prayer to his heauenly Father: (b) *I pray not for the world, but for thoſe, which thou haſt giuen me.* O dreadfull exception! What ſhall become of thoſe perſons eternally both Soule and Body, for whom the Redeemer of the world will not vouchſafe to pray? Or what hope of their Saluation can there be? Therefore happy are thoſe, who during their peregrination & exile here, are forced for the tyme to be in the *world*, yet are not of the *world*. But I will add to theſe former authorities this enſuing inference: Yf diuers moſt learned Phiſitians ſhould with ioynt conſent preſcribe to their patients, that ſuch & ſuch meats they ſhold forbeare, as being maine enemyes, or poyſon to their Health; would not thoſe Patients, who ſhould contemne their preſcriptions heerein, and ſhould moſt earneſtly couet and ſeeke after ſuch prohibited meats, be thought to be inſenſible, ſtupid, and cattelle of the weale, and good ſtate of their Body? How then chanceth it, that ſo many thouſands of the world, hearing and reading the former ſacred authorities, (in which our *B. Sauiour* and his Apoſtles do euen anathematize, and curſe the *world*, proteſting themſelues to be Enemyes to it, and it to them) ſhould

neuer-

neuertheleſſe put all their confidence, ioye, & comfort in the *World*, and in the pleaſures and delights thereof? O madneſſe!

Coſmophila.

Reuerend Sir, you haue (I grant) fully conuinced me (and that from the holy Scriptures) in my ouermuch prejudging and eſteeming of the imaginary worth of the *world*. And indeed I do ſee ſuch a mayne oppoſition betweene our *Sauiour* and the *world*, as that I much grieue, that my Father did (and I feare hitherto doth) ſo highly prize and eſtimate the ſame. And particularly touching my ſelfe, I do acknowledg no ſmall misfortune, that at the tyme of my Baptiſme, the name of *Coſmophila* (which I am told, ſignifyeth *a louer of the world*) was giuen vnto me. But that is paſt. Well *Good Sir*, ſeeing the *world* and the inuirements thereof are moſt domageable to a ſpirituall and retired life, as euidently appeareth from the Scriptures aboue alledged; I would therfore intreate you to enlarge your diſcourſe of this ſubiect; ſeeing it is the chiefeſt ſnare within which mans ſpirituall enemy doth entangle ſo many thouſands of poore ſoules. And that what you haue already propoſed from the written word of God, you would fortify with other moſt forcing proofes, either of Example, which is much preuayling, or els of Reaſon: Since not only to my ſelfe, but to any other, to whom theſe your ſpeaches may hereafter come, this your whole diſcourſe may

be

be very beneficiall, as begetting in them a hatred to that (I meane to the *world*) the which our Saviour, and his Apostles did so much hate.

Confessarius.

Cosmophila. I will satisfy your Request, and I am resolued to launch forth into an Ocean of deeper discourse, in regard of the importance of the subiect here treated of, then in the beginning I did intend. Therefore to prove that all this *world* is Vanity, and consequently not of iust force to withhould a Man, or Woman, from vndergoing a more spirituall life; I will not insist (as I did before) only in speculation of this point; but I will rest in the confession of such an one, who enioyed all the pleasures in the world in the highest degree; and yet in the end, was enforced to confesse them all to be *Vanities*. This, whom I meane, is King (c) *Salomon*, whome the Scripture (c) 1. Paralyp. c. 7. auerreth, that he enioyed all the pleasures of the world (either for riches, or for subiection of other Tributary Kings to him) for he had all the Kings from the River of the *Philistians* vnto *Egypt* as his seruants; or for magnificence of his Trayne and retinue; or for the wonderfull daily expences in his Court. Lastly for his sensuall and corporall pleasure of the flesh, for he had seaven hundred Wyues, as Queenes, and three hundred others as Concubines: All which Gods sacred Word relateth of the worldly wealth, wildome, riches and prosperity

rity of King *Salomon*. But now after his fruition for a long tyme of all these (d) seuerall temporall felicities, obserue his iudgment of them (as his *Motte*) in these few words: *Vanitas vanitatum & omnia vanitas: Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity*. Where more clearely to expresse his meaning of these few words, by *Vanity of vanities*, he vnderstandeth (according to the iudgment of S. (e) *Ierome*) the greatnes of this *Vanity*, aboue all other *Vanities* that may be imagined. And againe, the same *Salomon*, calling his eye backward vpon all the temporall felicities afore enioyed by him, thus closeth this point: *I saw* (f) *in them all, vanity, and affliction of mynd*.

(d) 3. *Reg.* 4. 3. *Reg.* 22. *Eccles.* 1.

(e) *Ierom in cap.* 1. *Eccles.*

(f) *Reg. vbi supra.*

Now, to fortify more strongly the iudgmet of *Salomon*, calling the vanities of the world *Affliction of the mind*, let vs call to mind the words of our *Redeemer*, bearing the same Sense with the former sentence of *Salomon*. For our (g) *Sauiour* calleth the pleasures and vanities of the world, *Thornes*; insinuating thereby that they prick and wound the Soule, as Thornes do the Body. That this is true, is most euident, since we find by experience, that the Honours, pleasures, and commodities of the world do neuer afford any true repose, rest, or quietnes to the Soule. For we daily may obserue, that the worldly thoughts of these transitory things neuer ceale to prick and gaule the minds of such, as prosecute and follow after them. They rush vpon them in the morning as soone as they awake; they attend vpon them all the day; they bring them

(g) *Mar.* 13.

to their bed, and hinder their sheep, and afflict them with imaginary dreames. O how many worldlings enthralled either to Riches, to Honours, or Pleasures of the flesh, find this to be true, which now I speake? and therefore these *Vanities* are called by the Prophet *Ieremy*, (h) *those Tyrants, which will not afford any rest, neither night, nor day.* (h) Ierem. 16.

To what hath been aboue said, we may adioyne the seuerall miseryes, which necessarily attend vpon these worldly pleasures; I will insist only in one, or two. The first then may be, that admitting these pleasures were in themselues to be much prized and desired; yet obserue how their sweetnes is abated. First by the *Instability*, & *Vncertainty* of enioying them for any long tyme; and therefore how great a misery is it to a worldly man, whose felicity wholy resteth in the fruition of these *Vanities*, suddainly, and vnexpectedly to be pulled from them? And how an inexplicable a griefe was it to the *Richman* in the Gospell to heare that discomfortable message: *Stulte* (i) *hac nocte &c. Foole this very night thou shalt dye, and the things which thou hast prouided, whose shall they be?* (i) Luc. 12.

Another Attendant of the world is *Discontentment*, which sowres and makes bitter all the pleasures thereof. For cast your eye on euery seuerall temporall delight, and obserue the sauce adioyned to it. For example; the pleasure of the flesh, euen when it is lawfull and honest, is (as *S. Paul* affirmeth) *attended with tribulation* (k) *of the flesh*, (this is for you, *Cosmophila*, if you intend hereafter to marry) (k) 1. Cor. 7.

but if it be enioyed with sinne, then infinitly more it is enuironed with seuerall anxieties of mynd. In like manner the aduancement to Honours and Dignities stands subiect to all *Vassillage* and *Seruitude* that can be deuised, & also to the danger of being after cast downe into Disgrace and Contumely. Briefly the possession of Riches lyeth open to feare of *loosing them*, and vpon the suddaine to be pulled from them. And the Truth of all this is so cleare and vndeniable, as that I could exemplify it (not speaking of tymes past) in diuers persons of these tymes, and some of them of my neere and familiar acquaintance.

Now all this being most true, I demand, Of what iudgment or braynes is that Man or woman, who for the enioying of such worldly fooleryes, will forbeare the heauenly Course of a Religious life? And thus far of this subiect, wherein I haue spread my selfe more largely, by reason it seeme, by your owne words (*Cosmophila*) that this Motiue of the World, & the pleasures thereof, is one mayne impediment, why your Father (though otherwise a Vertuous good Catholike) doth not giue that full approbation, and allowance to a votary lyfe, as could be wished.

Cosmophila.

Syr, you haue spoken very fully and irrepliably, and indeed euen till this present I did much prize the worldly allurements and felicities at a far higher rate, then now, after your dis-

discourse thereof is finished, I doe. So much blinded (I graunt) was my poore womanish iudgment, in not truly ballancing and weighing of these matters before this tyme. But yet (*Good Syr*) though you haue partly touched vpon that point aboue, (I meane) that the pleasures and delights of this world haue their counterpoyze of Discontents adioyning to them; yet if it shall please you to treat more largly thereof, your paines therein (I hope) will be worthily bestowed; and the rather, seeing there are many persons persuaded, that the careless Christian enioyeth his pleasures in all full manner, wholy exempt from all anxieties of the mynd, and that the vertuous do liue in a continuall sadnes and Melancholy, full of Griefe, and voyde of pleasure.

Confessarius.

I am content so to do. And first then you are to know, that both the Vertuous and Wicked haue their continuall Crosses, (as I may tearme them) and Afflictions in this world, & this through diuine Prouidence; yet these two different sorts of men haue them after a most different manner, as hereafter I will shew. First, that the Vertuous haue their desolations and Afflictions sometymes, is euident out of the words of our Sauiour himselfe, thus saying: (l) *He, that doth not beare his Crosse, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple.* To whome accords the Apostle in these words (m) *All those that will liue godly in Christ Iesus, shall suffer persecution.*

(l) *Luc.* 14.

(m) 2. *Tim.* 3.

(n) In Homil. 67. ad pop. Antioch.

tion. So true is that saying of S. Chrysostome: (n) *Tribulation is an indissoluble and inseparable bond of a Christian life.* All which is from the immediate hand of God, for the good the Soule of his Seruants.

Now to descend to the Wicked, or loose Christians, I say, that these men haue also such discontents and griefs, as well may be tearmed their Crosses. For though the Wicked suffer no iniuries from the Venturus, yet are they seuerall wayes afflicted. For first (besides what is aboue briefly said of this point) we find daily that one worldly, or sensuall man receaueth griefe and vexation from another worldly, or sensuall man. *Secondly*, such men suffer Tribulation euen from their owne proper Vices; to the which they become worse then Gally-slaues, as wholy enchayned, and enthralled to performe whatsoeuer a long continued habit of these Vices shall command, and exact from them; they not being able to make any resistance, or repugnancy thereto. *Thirdly*, the wicked suffer tribulation euen from their owne bad Consciences; So truly doth S. *Austin* say, speaking of the *Worme of Conscience* (as the Scripture (o) calleth it.) *No tribulation* (p) *is greater, then the Conscience of ones sinnes.*

(o) Mar. 9.

(p) August. in Psalm. 45.

But now let vs ballance a litle the aduersities or desolations of pious and Religious persons, with the Afflictions of the Wicked; & so obserue thereby whether of these sorts of affliction were rather to be vndergone, and suffered. And first, the Afflictions of the *Iust* are but *short*, and *momentary*, during only the tyme

of

of their banishment in this World: And therefore the Scripture sayth of Iust and pious men, dying: (q) *Blessed are the dead, who shall dye in our Lord; Euen so sayth the Spirit, that they shall rest from their labours.* And againe; that *God* (r) *shall then wype from their eyes all teares.* But to proceed further to other priuiledges accompaning the Tribulations of Religious and vertuous persons: First, Christ himselfe auerreth, that *inestimable Comfort* and *Ioy* doth euer attend the Tribulations of the Iust; saying to his Disciples, and in them to all other vertuous soules: (s) *You shall weepe and lament, but the world shall reioyce; and you shalbe made sorrowfull, but your sorrow shalbe turned into ioy.* The truth of which words the Apostle *S. Paul* tryed in himselfe, thus saying in the throng of all his Aduersities: (t) *I am replenished with Consolation, I do exceedingly abound in all Tribulation.*

(q) *Apoc. 14.*

(r) *Apoc. 21.*

(s) *Ioan. 16.*

(t) *2. Cor. 7.*

The third priuiledge of the Crosses of the Iust, is that they are most *Fruitfull* and profitable to the soules of the pious; since Tribulation is a meanes appointed by God, for the obtayning of the kingdome of Heauen: For thus we read our Sauiour to say: (u) *Blessed are they, who suffer persecution for Iustice sake, for theirs is the kingdome of Heauen.* And the Apostle much celebrateth the benefit of the Anxieties and Crosses of the vertuous in these words: *The* (x) *passions of this tyme are not worthy of the glory, which shalbe reuealed in vs.* But now to turne the leafe ouer, and to contemplate a little of the miseries of the wicked, euen in the middest of their inioying temporall felicities, and to obserue,

(u) *Matth. 5.*

(x) *Rom. 8.*

how their Tribulations are wholy, destitu
of those priuiledges, granted to the troubles o
the *Iust*. First, we find, that the afflictions of th
wicked are perpetuall and interminable: fo
(y) *Esay* 66. of them it is said: (y) *The worme of the wicke*
(meaning in hell) *shall not dye, and their fi*
shall not be extinguished; And therefore the lo
and detriment (insteed of all gaine), whic
commeth from the Crosses and Tribulation
of the Wicked, is related by our Sauiour i
those words, which shalbe spoken at the da
(z) *Mat.* 25. of the last iudgment: (z) *Goe into eternall fyr*
which is prepared for the Deuill and his Angells:
most miserable Relegation!

Thus far (*Cosmophila*) I haue waded in th
subiect for your pleasure, and (if it may be) fo
the greater satisfaction of the worthy knig
your Father, who apprehendeth worldl
pleasures and delights (as free from all grie
of mind) with so strong a bent both of vnder
standing, and will. And now for the closur
of all, I refer to his more retired and impartia
iudgment; Whether the commodities & plea
sures of the world being encompassed abou
on all sydes with miseries and afflictions o
mynd, ought to preuayle so far with any ma
or woman (carefull of their eternall felicity
as to withdraw and hold them from imbra
cing a most vertuous, and retired Course o
lyfe; granting that the said Religious life is no
for the tyme altogether depriued of desola
tions, deiections, and other languishments
commonly incident to the said vertuous life.

Cosmo

Cosmophyla.

I cannot deny (*Syr*) but that you haue declared all these reasons vrged by my Father, not to be of that solidity and weight, as I did at the first take them to be (I would to God, that my Fathers iudgment could be as easely herein conuinced;) which difficulties in a religious lyfe, were the only (or at least principall) Motiues for his giuing the lesse approbation to this seuere and lequestred Course, here in this place practised. For you know (*Good Sister Celia*) as I said aboue, it was with much soliciting and intreating of him and my Mother, that they gaue their consent for your departure out of Englád: But seeing my iudgment is greatly altered (or rather much quieted) touching the force or weaknes in the allowing of the said Reasons of my Father; I will proceed to another point; in which I am to intreate your furtherance of discourse, *Reuerend good Syr.*

Celia.

Stay a litle your intended proceeding (*deare Sister*) to any other branch of Speach; for I meane, with the allowance of our *much Reuerende Abbesse*, and *Ghostly Father* heere present, to insist in one impediment touching a Votary lyfe, of which I confesse I had seuerall times strong Temptationss (through the subtilty of the Enemy of mans soule, and weakenes of

my owne flesh) for the relinquishing of my vndertaken Course: But through his Grace, which is neuer wanting to those, who beg it with all humility and prayer, I most easely ouercame it at last. I am more willing to discouer the same, thereby that others (when the like occasion may occurre) be not wholy dismayed at such like Temptations. It was this (which is in part before touched by my Sister *Cosmophila*, and in part answered by *Father Confessarius*, yet here I will repeate it hauing byn for the tyme greatly afflicted therewith; and things of moment, may warrantably be iterated, or related oftner, then once.)

Oftentimes I was assaulted by the Enemy, in my mind, that many things are so hard in Religion, that I much doubted, whether my body (through its former delicacy, and softnes in education during my stay in England) could euer brooke and endure all those corporall mortifications & austerities, which are found in a Religious Life; *as rising in the nights, fasting, and sparenes of dyet, submission to be vnder another, silence at certaine tymes*, and the like. But in the end (during the small tyme I haue yet continued in this Monastery) I ouercame them all, and did find an extraordinary repose & quietnes of my soule in the subduing of them; fully confessing in that behalfe, those words of our Sauiour to be most true: *In* (a) *your Patience you shall possesse your soules.* And indeed when I came seriously to waigh those suggested austerities in the ballance of Reason; I did find most vnanswerable Reasons, whereby our body might

(a) *Luc. 21.*

might be most forcibly impelled to a voluntary, and willing bearing, and practising of them.

And first, I was wont often to call to mind what I had heard learned men to say, to wit, That though our flesh affecteth liberty, and much cherishing, yet the Body euen as its first creation, was made to be subiect to the soule, and not the soule to the Body, and therefore we are to chastice our body, and to curbe all the inordinate motions thereof. And indeed seeing the Soule is to haue a true command & Soueraignty ouer the body (and this by Gods ordination,) the mastring of the body in not yealding to the temptations thereof, is nothing so difficult a matter, as is commonly feared by most, that haue a desire to enter into a religious lyfe. And the reason hereof is, in regard of many forcible Motiues, which may much strengthen the soule, to curbe the inbred desires of the flesh, and bring it into subiection. And those Motiues (among diuers others here omitted) may be drawne, First from the Loue which we beare to God; which Loue of God doth naturally take comfort in suffering hardnes, tribulation, or any aduerse fortune, for Gods sake. Againe, the *example of Christ* himselfe ought to be a great Spur vnto vs, in this Conflict betweene the Spirit and the Body, who suffered so much for our Redemption: Why then is it not reasonable for vs to follow his footesteps, in a far lower degree of suffering?

Thirdly, as aboue is intimated, the *Diuine*

comforts and Heauenly Consolations (with which God vsually visiteth that soule, which courageously wars with the body, for the soules owne good) greatly animate the soule to this battel; since these spirituall comforts (as hidden Manna) much allay the asperities, vndergone for the conquering of the flesh, and its pleasures? Againe, the *Expectation of an eternall Reward* and Crowne, which is infallibly after this life to be giuen to all such, who bring the body into Obedience for the better seruing of God, makes all the voluntary labours of the body to seeme nothing. Lastly, I may vrge, that the *Feare of eternall damnation* both of soule and body (which is incurred through the vnlawfull pleasures, and cherishments of the body,) ought infinitly to encourage vs, for not yealding our selues, as thrall to all the pleasures of the body. O how terrible a saying will it be to a soule in Hell, to heare those words, spoken by *Abraham* to the *rich Glutton*, then lying in Hell: *Thou* (b) *didst receaue good things in thy lyfe tyme, but now thou art tormented?* Now then if one be of such nycenes and delicacy, as not to endure any corporall affliction or mortification, how then shall he endure the eternity of torments and paynes, which are prepared for all loose, delicate, and sensuall Christians? Let that soule then which wholy gineth way to all corporall pleasures, solaces, & Indulgency of the body, remember those most dreadfull words in the Gospell: (c) *Bynd him hands and feete, and cast him into vtter darknes, where there shalbe weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

(b) *Luc. 16.*

(c) *Matth. 22.*

There-

Therefore to conclude this point, euery one, who hath holy Inspirations from God, for the imbracing of a Votary and religious lyfe, ought to cast their Eyes vpon all those, who are gone before vs, and haue in far greater measure of mortification traced that course of lyfe, of which we heere speake; I meane, they are to call to mind the religious lifes of *S. Hilarion, S. Ierome, S. Benedict, S. Bernard, S. Francis*, and many hundred more, all whose bodies were made of the same flesh and blood of which our bodies are made, and yet most valiantly they subdued their bodies to the spirit. They in so doing did expect the same reward which other religious persons at this day do expect: They now enioy Heauen, and so may we hereafter by following (though in a far lower proportion) their austerities of body, arriue to the same Heauen. But to presse this point more particularly, as concerning our owne Sex, let vs remember those blessed Women, *Cecilia, Agnes, Agatha, Barbara, Dorothea, Catharina*, and many more of former tymes, who not only resisted, through their intemerate and vowed virginity, all the temptations and allurements of the flesh; but also with most wounderfull constancy and fortitude, endured glorious Martyrdomes for the loue Christ, and sauing of their owne soules.

Therefore briefly, let ech of vs in the middest of our Austerities take courage, and say with the Apostle: *I* (d) *can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me.*

(d) *Philip. 4.*

Cosmophila.

Good sister, this your spirituall Resolution in ouercomming your mortifications, is far greater, then I euer expected to haue found in you, at which I much ioy. But to turne my selfe to you (good *Father Confessarius*) I cannot deny, but that you haue greatly discouered the weakines and insufficiency of all my former obiected reasons, against the imbracing of a retired and religious life; Yet seeing it is the honour and priuiledge of *Truth*, not only to be able to withstand and breake through the forces layed against it, but withall to fortify and strengthen it selfe with vnanswerable Arguments and Reasons, for the patronizing and warranting of it selfe: And further, seeing diuers things there are, which as they cannot be greatly impugned by Arguments, so they haue few, or no Arguments for their supporting (though I presume, the warrantablenes of a Religious lyfe is not of this Nature) therefore I am to make bould both with you, and with *the Reuerend Abbesse* here present (for I am perswaded, that her long gouernment & experience in matters of this subiect do much enable her) that both of you would insist in your future discourses, in laying open the *Dignity*, *Antiquity*, *prouisses*, *priuiledges*, *Benefits* (and other such preualyting Circumstances) of a Votary life, which may most forcibly conduce to the securing of the Resolution of such, as may hereafter vndergoe that spirituall Course: *The*

Hart

Hart of euery one is in the hands of God, and who knoweth how he will dispose of it?

Confessarius.

Both I, and (no doubt) the *Lady Abbesse*, will condescend to this your pious request, since Charity bindeth as thereto: And for my selfe, I thinke it most expedient, somewhat to enlarge my speach vpon those three mayne points, which are Essentiall to a Religious lyfe; I meane, *Chastity*, *Poverty*, and *Obedience*; to the which all Religious persons are by solemne Vow obliged.

Now the more fully to know the dignity of these three points, it will be fitting here to set downe the admonition of the Apostle *Saint Iohn* giuen to all Christians; and then after to shew what particular reuerence these generall distinct Vowes do beare to his said Admonition: Thus then that Apostle counselleth: *Loue* (e) *not the world, neither the things that are in the world; If any loue the world, the Charity of the Father is not in him; Because all that is in the world is Concupiscence of the flesh, and Concupiscence of the eyes, and pryde of lyfe.* Thus is the kingdome of this world deuided into these three parts, as it were into three distinct Precincts. (e) 1. Ioan. 2.

Now for the better vnfoulding and explaining the true meaning of this passage of Scripture, we are to vnderstand that by the *Concupiscence of the flesh*, the Apostle comprehendeth *all sensuall pleasures of the body*, and other delights vsed in cherishing and pampering the flesh, whereby

wherby the flesh may burst out into any vnlawfull and sinfull Actions. *By the Concupiscence of the Eyes*, he meaneth all *beauty, and brauery of Riches*; By *pride of lyfe*, he signifieth the Vanity of *Ambition*, consisting in worldly honour & Estimation. These three then are the most generall Vanities of this life; I meane, *Carnall pleasures, Couetousnes, and Ambition*; By which three, as by his strongest Nets, the Deuill doth daily ensnare many poore Christians to his subiection, & to their Soules eternall perdition.

But now obserue how the malice and Venome of these three most pestilent diseases, are cured by the vowes performed in a Religious life: First then, the Vow of perpetuall *Chastity* of body (with the performance of the prescriptions adioyned thereto) cureth the malady of the *Concupiscence of the flesh*: The Vow of *Pouerty* destroyeth the disease of *Concupiscence of the Eyes*, to wit, desire of enioying riches, & the vnquenchable thirst of Auarice. Lastly the *Vow of Obedience* cutteth away from the soule, *all pryde of life*; since he, or she, who willingly subiect themselues in all lawfull things to the direction of another, is far from offending in vayne Glory, which the Apostle aboue calleth, *Pryde of lyfe*. By this then we may see, how a Votary and religious lyfe (being truly performed and led) doth meete with all the mayne temptations of the Deuill; ouercomming them, and beating them downe through the assistance of Gods Grace, which is neuer wanting to such, as by due appointed meanes, do implore it at his hands.

And

And here it will be much conducing if (besides what is allready touched thereof) we insist longer in the displaying the Worth & dignity of the obiects of the three former Vowes: And to begin with *Chastity*. Chastity then teacheth vs (as the Apostle affirmeth) *how* (f) *to possesse our Vessell in sanctification*, that is our body, which is a Vessell, or Receptacle of our Soule. Now, who doth violate this precept, shall not as S. *Paul* sayth) *possesse* (g) *the kingdome of Heauen*. Here then we are to obserue, that for the preseruation of *Chastity*, many things doe occurre in a Religious life; As for example, the cloystering, and secret retiring of the party, taketh away the sight and speach of such things, as are dangerous in this kind; as dangerous companye, and familiaritie; and most of all, the occasion, and Commodity, or Oportunity for the giuing the reynes to ones naturall desire, for the enioying of corporall, and vnlawfull pleasures. Chastity. (f) 1. *Thess.* 4. (g) *Gal.* 5.

A second help to *Chastity* (besides the spaynes of dyet) is the daily practise of all kind of vertue, which is continually vsed in a Religious lyfe; and this is *Prayer*, *Meditation*, and other vertues, which increase the deuotion of the spirit, euen by their owne Nature; And this must necessarily be the effect of *Prayer*, & *Meditation*; seeing by how much our soule and mind is more strengthned, by so much the body is more weakened. And to conclude this point of Chastity with the prayses thereof ascribed thereto, in Gods holy word: First, the *Kingkome of Heauen* is compared to (h) *Virgins*, (h) *Mat. 25.*

Againe,

(i) E. say. 17. Againe, that a *Virgin* is called, *Filia* (i) *Sion*; i Which place by the word *Virgo* is vnderstoo the *Church of God*. Moreouer, we read that. T

(k) 1. Cor. 7. (k) *woman vnmaried and the Virgin do thinke the things that pertaine to God.* And yet more, w

(l) 2. Cor. 11. find it commanded (l) *Virginem castam exhibe Christo; to present our selfe a chast Virgin to Chr* Finally it is said, as a speciall priuiledge allo

(m) Apoc. 14. ted to *Virgins*, (m) *That they shall follow the Lambe whereseoeuer he shall goe: They are the first fruits God, and to the Lambe.*

I will finally close this point with this on obseruation; to wit, that *Christ* himselfe was *Virgin*; Our *Blessed Lady* (*Christs* Mother) was *Virgin*; Christs *Precursour* (I meane S. *Iohn Ba tist*) was a *Virgin*; and *Christs best* beloued *Euan gelist S. Iohn*, was a *Virgin*. Is not then that Sta most Blessed, glorious, and most to be desired the which both the Redeemer of the worl and those, who were most neere to him i loue and affection, did wholy and inuiolabl professe? And thus far of *Chastity*, and the vo thereof, wherby all vnlawfull and fiery Co cupiscence of the flesh is wholy quenched.

Next I will descend to the *Concupiscence the Eyes*, (by which is vnderstood the vani of *Riches*, and wealth of the world) which like sort is extinguished by voluntary pou ty. Now to conceaue in part the worthines

Pouerty. *Voluntary Pouerty*, it will be much conduci to obserue the danger of *Riches*, and the per lous state of the soule, wherein a rich m standeth, and all this proued euen out of t sacred Scriptures: Of this point then, we th

th

thus read: (n) *Riches shall not profit a man in the day of Reuenge*; and hereupon it is said in Gods holy word in the person of *Rich men* lying tormented in Hell: (o) *What hath the vaunting of our riches profitted vs?* But to descend to the New Testament. Do we not find our *Lord* in *S. Luke* to bewayle the state of *rich men* in these words? *Woe* (p) *be to you rich men, for that you haue receaued your Consolation in this lyfe*. And the reason thereof is deliuered by *S. Paul* thus saying: *They,* (q) *which will be rich do fall into temptations, and into the snares of Satan; and into many improfitable and hurtfull desires, which do drowne them in euerlasting destruction and perdition.* So iust reason therefore had our *Sauiour* thus to conclude generally against rich men: (r) *Amen, I say vnto you, because a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdome of Heauen:* O that *rich men* would ponder deeply these points. Here now we see the vanity and dangers of *riches*, which danger is wholy preuented by its contrary, that is, by *voluntary Pouerty*; through which a Religious person disclaymeth from hauing any wealth or substance in particular to himselfe.

(n) Prou. 11.
(o) Sapient. 5.
(p) Luc. 6.
(q) 1. Timoth. 6.
(r) Mat. 19.

This then being so, is not that religious woman most happy, who by her profession of *Pouerty*, hath freed herselfe from all those spirituall dangers set downe in the Scriptures, whereunto the rich worldlings do stand thrall, and subiect? and in lieu thereof doth purchase to her diuers priuiledges and spirituall benefits, which rise from her *voluntary Pouerty*, and a free relinquishing of all worldly wealth? Of which many priuiledges I will

here recount some few: First then *Religious Pouerty* taketh away pryde, and haughtines of mind, which commonly accompanieth *Riches*, and withall it taketh from vs the power of committing many sinnes, which are wrought by the occasion of wealth; so forcing a man by a kind of necessity to liue well. Secondly *Religious Pouerty* not only preuenteth in vs the perpetrating of many sinnes; but withall it ingendreth in the enioyers thereof diuers Vertues, as Modesty, Temperance, and Humility; which last Vertue hath a kind of affinity, or neere entercourse with *Pouerty*.

A third benefit of *Religious Pouerty* is, that it is of force to cancell & blot out the sinnes of a mans whole former lyfe, so satisfying for them. And according hereto we find the Prophet Esay thus to speake in the person of God:

(s) *Esay* 48. (s) *Behould, I haue boyled thee throughly, but not as siluer: I haue chosen thee in the fornace of Pouerty*, meaning hereby, that he hath so refyned and purged him through *Pouerty*, as that he deserueth to be chosen and loued. A fourth benefit of *Pouerty* (to pretermit all others) is, that it conformeth vs to *Our Blessed Saviour*, who so loued Pouerty, as that he was not only wholy depriued of all *riches*, but had *not as much*, as

(t) *Luc.* 9. any place (as (t) *Luke* recordeth) *to repose his head*. And accordingly hereto we find, that when *Iesus* gaue authority to his Apostles to goe abroad into seuerall Countryes to preach

(u) *Luc. vbi sup.* the Gospell, he commanded them (by reason of his loue to *Spirituall Pouerty*) (u) that they should take nothing for their iourny, *nor scrip*

nor bread, nor money, neither haue two Coates, as we read in the ſame Euangeliſt. Now what Chriſtian of iudgment, and carefull of his ſoule, will not highly prize that ſtate of lyfe, in which Chriſt (both God & Man) did chooſe to himſelfe to liue, and which he moſt carefully recommended to his owne beloued Apoſtles?

To come to the third and laſt worldly *Vanity* ſet downe, which is *Pryde of life*; where *by Pryde of lyfe* the Euangeliſt (x) vnderſtandeth *vayne glory*, and deſire of worldly honour, and dignity. This vanity, being a ſpirituall and moſt dangerous impediment of ſeruing God, is taken away by the vow of a *Voluntary Obedience* and ſubiection, practized in a religious lyte; For whoſoeuer (Man or woman) doth moſt willingly vow to obey their Superiour in all lawfull things; that perſon cannot (ſo long as he obſerueth his vow) fall into the danger of *Pryde of life*. This vanity of *Vaine Glory*, conſiſting in the words of other mens mouths paſſed vpon one, is (as the other two former points ſet downe by *S. Iohn*) much diſliked and reprehended in the Scriptures: for thus we read therein: (y) *As ſiluer is tryed in the fire by blowing to it; ſo is a Man tryed in the mouth of him that prayſeth*. For if the ſiluer be good, it taketh no hurt by the fyre, but if it be baſe and not pure, it reſolueth all into fume; ſo fareth it with a vayne-glorious man through prayſe and commendation. Iuſt reaſon therefore had King *Dauid* to auoyde all vayne glory reſting in others ſpeaches, thus crying out againſt it:

(x) *S. Ioan. 2.*

Obedience.

(y) *Prouerb. 27.*

(z) Psal. 140. *Away* (z) *with this oyle, and ointment of sinners let it not come vpon my heade:* And the like iust reason had the Apostle to contemne the prayses of other men passed vpon him; thus saying: (a) *I esteeme litle to be iudged of you, or of the day of man.*

(a) 1. Cor. 4.

Now the worth of this Vertue of *Obedience* is much celebrated in Gods sacred word: For we read it to be preferred before Sacrifice, the Prophet *Samuel* thus saying thereof: (b) *Obedience is better then Sacrifice* (which passage you *Cosmophila* could alledge aboue in a wrong sense.) And these words *S. Gregory* thus interpreteth: *Obedience* (c) *is better then Sacrifice; because in Sacrifice the flesh of another thing; by Obedience our owne will is killed, or as it were sacrificed to God.* Now the spirituall fruite springing from *Obedience* is great; for first (as *S. Gregory* sayth) (d) *Obedience is the only vertue which plan-teth all other vertues in the mind; and preserueth them after they are once planted.* The truth of which assertion is proued seuerall wayes: First because the liberall offer of a mans selfe to God (which is made by the Vowe of *Obedience*) prouoketh God to be bountifull and liberall towards that man againe; For it is the peculiar goodnes and disposition of God, neuer to suffer himselfe to be ouercome in bounty and loue; therefore it followeth, that whosoeuer giueth himselfe by *Obedience* vnto God, (which is done, when a man resigneth his will by vow of *Obedience* to those, who are substituted in Gods place) he doubtlesly in recompence thereof receaueth from God all spiri-

(b) 1. Reg. 15.

(c) S. Greg. Moral. 35. c. 10.

(d) Gregor. ibid. c. 19.

tuall

mall Graces, and finally God himſelfe. Secondly, *Obedience* is ſaid to plant all other Vertues in the mind, becauſe in the practiſe of *Obedience*, it followeth, that we muſt practize them all.

Another fruite of *Obedience* is, that it doth ſubiect vs, and all our actions to the will and pleaſure of God, and this without any reluctation or reſiſtance; but with ſuch perfection, as that they are wholy dependant of him, and guided or directed by him; Since what action ſoeuer the *Obedient* religious perſon doth, the ſame he doth for Gods ſake: Therefore in further proofe of the fruite and dignity of *Obedience* I will conclude this point with the teſtimony and words of the Bleſſed & learned *Cardinall Bellarmine*, he thus writing thereof: (e) *Quam ingens lucrum eſt &c. How great a gaine is reaped by obedience, as to merit with God in euery action? for that man who doth nothing of his owne proper Will, but by Obedience of his Prelate or Superiour, doth in euery worke Sacrifice vnto God, a moſt gratefull Sacrifice. And which is altogether moſt admirable, if the Superiour perhaps doth ſinne in Commanding, the ſubiect obeying his Commandement ſinneth not, but doth merit in obeying; ſo long as the thing Commanded is not euidently a ſinne.* Thus the *Cardinall*.

(e) *De Septem verb. Domin. l. 2. c. 26.*

Now thus far (*Good Coſmopbile*) I haue ſpread my ſaile in diſcourſe of the three eſſentiall Vowes of a votary lyfe (to wit, of *Chaſtity*, *Pouerty*, and *Obedience*.) And here now you ſee vpon what principall grounds a Religious lyfe is ſeated, theſe three vertues being (as it were) the three mayne pillars, which

ſupport the Edifice of a Monaſticall and votary ſtate: and withall you may ſee, what ſtrong Reaſons your ſiſter *Celia* hath for her continuance in her retired courſe; and how litle Reaſon you haue for ſeeking to diuert and change her iudgment and will from the ſame.

Coſmophila.

Good Syr I yield. And here I pronounce openly that neuer (neuer more) ſhall my tongue vtter any word of derogation, touching the worth and dignity of a Religious lyfe. But *Syr* I would intreate you to proceed to other Heads, from whence this Heauenly life may be warranted with more ſtore of Reaſons, in the iudgment of vs who be of the Laity.

Confeſſarius.

I am moſt ready thereto; ſo willing I am to alter your iudgment herein, being erroneous; and to fortify and ſtrengthen it, being once rightly eſtabliſhed and confirmed. The next point then, which I will take into my conſideration, is to ſhew the *Antiquity* of a Religious ſtate, ſeeing men much pryze Antiquity of things; as we find they do in the beginning of Kingdomes, priuate Families, in points of fayth *&c.* Now referring you to what is aboue ſaid, touching the *Eſſenes*, being religious men among the Iewes; I here further ſay, that our *Sauiour* himſelfe, did firſt inſtitute a religious

Antiquity of a Religious Courſe.

lyfe.

lyfe, since he first instituted the foresaid three essentiall points of that life; I meane *Chastity*, *Pouerty*, and *Obedience*. For besides what is deliuered aboue by the Apostles in commendation and warrant of these three vertues, we find our *Sauiour* thus to speake of *Chastity*: *There be* (a) *Eunuches, who haue gelded themselues for the Kingdome of God*; which words are spoken only of those, who haue cut off all power of marrying, by a perpetuall and solemne vow, and such as Religion obligeth vs vnto.

(a) *Math.* 19.

In warrant of *Voluntary Pouerty*, Christ thus sayth: *Vnlesse* (b) *a man renounce all that he possesseth, he cannot be my Disciple*. And hereupon as prescribing this Rule of *Pouerty* to his Disciples, he commanded them, *that* (c) *they should not possesse either gould or siluer*, and did bid them (as is aboue shewed) that they should carry with them *neither bag, nor scrip, nor meate*, nor any thing els, when they went to preach to strange Nations: Lastly, Christ did institute *Obedience* in those words: *He* (d) *that will come after me, let him deny himselfe*, which words all ancient and chiefe Fathers doe generally interprete of the *Vowe of Obedience*. Now that the Apostles did follow *Christ* his Institution herein, and professed a Religious life, is proued from the words of *S. Peter* to *Christ*: (e) *Behould we haue forsaken all things, and we haue followed thee*: which words do not declare only the *Pouerty* of the Apostles, but also their *Chastity*; seeing vnder the name *of all things*, the wyues of the Apostles must necessarily be vnderstood. Furthermore religious Obedience is

(b) *Luc.* 11.

(c) *Luc.* 10.

(d) *Luc.* 9.

(e) *Math.* 19.

gathered out of those last words of S. Peter aboue rehearsed, *And we haue followed thee*; since to follow another, is nothing else but to liue according to that others direction.

Celia.

Reuerend Father, you haue spoken fully of the Antiquity of a Religious life in generall, as prouing it from our Sauiours tyme; but I would intreate you to descend more particularly to the Antiquity of Religious *Virgins*; seeing that point concerneth me more neerely, in regard of my allready begun Course. And it also will giue (I think) better satisfaction to my sister *Cosmophila*. For what you haue aboue said of the first institution of a religious lyfe, may perhaps by her not be extended to *women*, but restrayned only to *men*.

Confessarius.

I will condescend to your words: First then We find that S. *Ignatius* the martyr (who was the Apostles Scholler) affirmeth *Colledges of Virgins*, and saluteth them in his (f) Epistles. Yea some of our Aduersaries the Protestants do thus confesse of this point: *In the flower of the Church* (meaning in the beginning of the primitiue Church) *there were* (g) *Virgins that professed perpetuall Chastity*. And which is more, our learned Aduersaries (the Century writers I meane, all being eminent Protestants) euen out of the rack of Truth confesse, that in *Constantines* tyme being

(f) Ignat. Ep. ad Philip.

(g) Abraham Schultetus in medulla Theologica.

being the first Christian Emperour, there were Monasteries (h) of Virgins; That there (i) then was a woman Governesse of professed Virgins. And furthermore the said Protestants make particular mention of the Veyle (k) of the Virgins, Of their religious (l) habit, and particularly of their Consecration (m); and all this in the syme of Constantine, who lived three hundred yeares after Christ. To conclude this point, the Antiquity of Virgin Nunnes is much celebrated by Ivinian the third Emperour after Constantine; and he had them in such Honour, as that he published an Edict, That who (n) should seeke not only to violate, but euen to marry a professed Nunne, should loose his life. Thus much of this point.

(h) Centur. 4. col. 467. vnder the title: De Monasterijs Virginum.
(i) Cent. 4. col. 874.
(k) Cent. 4. col. 468.
(l) Cent. 4. col. 874.
(m) Centur. 4. col. 805. & col. 869.
(n) This is related by Zozomen, in hist. l. 6. cap. 3.

Celia.

I thanke you, Good Father, for this your discounting: For I take great pleasure to heare, that this Religious Course by me begun, is warranted with such great Antiquity, and particularly in vs Women. And now Sir Cosmophila you may see, that this my Chosen Course of lyfe, is no late Inuention, or but an humane inuention, as some Enemyes thereto are not ashamed to affirme.

Cosmophila.

I agree with you (Good sister) in iudgment herein. But (Reuerend Good Syr) seeing this Religious Course of life, hath continued so many hundred yeares, as that no more touching this

point can be expected; I would gladly know, what kind of men, and especially of women haue imbraced this course; whether they haue beene but of the meaner sort only, or of more noble and worthy Persons; since this later degree of persons (if so you can proue it) will giue a great lustre and glory to a *Religious life*; For I obserue that diuers of high place & ranke in these dayes do euen contemne that Course; holding it as sorting only to the meaner condition and sort of Men, or Women.

Abbesse.

You shall giue me leaue (*Good Cosmophila*) to take this taske touching this your last question or demand, from *Father Confessarius*, with his good leaue, and to impose it vpon my selfe, & to relate what I haue read, as concerning this point in spiritual bookes written of this subiect in our owne tongue. I am the more bould herein, because many great examples not only of Men, but euen of women, imbracing this state of life, may be here alledged; And these Examples of women, do more neerely concerne vs Women; and therefore may with good shew of Reason be deliuered by a woman. Therefore I will most briefly begin with men, but will chiefly rest in the Presidents of Women.

First then we find, (to insist somewhat in fortaine Princes) *Lothurius a Westerne* Emperour, about the yeare 800. *Anastasius a Grecian* Emperour in the yeare 750. besides some o-

ther Emperours; *Hugo* King of *Prouence* and Emperour in the yeare 920. *Pipin*, king of Italy and eldest sonne to *Charles the Great* king of France, in the yeare 800. *Bamba* king of *Spaine*, about the yeare 670. to haue vndergone a Religious and Monastical lyfe. I will conclude, omitting many other forraine kings & Princes, with *Charlemaine*, who was king of *Austrasia* and *Sueuia*, and who receaued the habit of a Monke at Pope *Zachary* his hands. But to looke a little into our owne Country of *England*, we shall find it to haue beene most fertile herein, whiles the Land of *England* was deuided into many kingdomes. According hereto we may reckon *Sigebert* king of the *Northumbers*, anno 640. *Ethelred* king of the *Mercians*, anno 704. *Offa* king of the *East Saxons*; Some small tyme after *Kenred*. Finally *Inas*, king of the same *West Saxons*, all which did forsake the world, and became *Religious Monkes*. Thus far of men; omitting to speake of many other Princes, Lords, and Noble men, imbracing the same *Religious Course*.

But now to come to *women* of worth and dignity, as being more peculiar to our drift & intention, I will restrayne my selfe to *Empresses* and *Queenes*; who haue forsaken all Regall dignity or soueraignty, and after the death of their Husbands entered into a Monasticall lyfe, and became *Nunnes*, as we are at this present. First then, *Theodora* the Empresse, about the yeare 880. imbraced this course of lyfe. *Augusta*, another Empresse, anno 1190. *Richardis*, wyfe to the Emperour *Charles le Grosse*, did

build

build a Monastery, into the which she after entred, and therein dyed anno 890. *Cunegundes*, wyfe to *Henry* the Emperour. *Agnes*, wyfe to the Emperour *Henry* the third, gouerned some yeares the Empyre, after her husbands death, but in the end she surrendred vp the Empyre, and chose to liue in the humility of a Monasticall life, anno 1150. *Elizabeth*, wyfe to the Emperour *Albertus* the first, and Arch-duke of *Austria*, did build a Monastery in the yeare 1290. and in that Monastery taking the Monasticall habit of a *Nunne* most happily ended her dayes. This *Elizabeth* had two Daughters, who followed her Example; The one of them was married to the King of *Hungary*, the other to the *Count* of *Orthen*. In like sort the said *Elizabeth* had two grand children, to wit, the *Queene* of *Polonia*, & her daughter, who both entered into a Religious lyfe of *Nunnes*, although her said daughter was in some sort allured in marriage to the Duke of *Praistaw*.

To come to particular *Queenes*. And first *Tesia*, wyfe to *Rachisius* king of Italy with her Daughter *Retrudis*, ended their dayes in a Monastery, spending their tyme in great Sanctity. In France *Radegundis*, who was maried to king *Clotaire*, got his consent to depart from him, and entred into a Monastery at *Poictiers*, liuing and dying there with great shew of pietty and deuotion, in anno 529. Within some few yeares after *Adoera*, wyfe to *Chilperick* king of France, together with her daughter *Childerede*, betooke themselues to this heauenly profession.

ession. *Balda* about the yeare 650. wyfe to King *Clouis*, king of France, after the deceafe of her husband went to *Celles*, where ſhe enlarged a Monaſtery, afore built, and till death profeſſed therein a *Nunnes life*. Yt we caſt our eyes into *Spayne*, we ſhall find the like Examples of Deuotion; For we read that *Nunez*, wyfe to *Vremond* king of ſome Provinces of Spaine, and *Tereſa*, wyfe to *Abdadas* king of *Toledo*, became before their deaths two Religious and Cloyſtered Nunnes.

I will come to our owne Country of *England*; where we find great ſtore of ſuch Examples. And firſt *Eldrede*, wyfe to the king of the *Northumbers* in the yeare 670. *Ethelburg* ſpouſe to *Inas* king of the Eaſt Saxons, did both vndertake a votary lyfe. In like ſort *Etheldred*, who being wife to two Engliſh kings, kept her Virginity with them both, and obtained of the later husband (which was granted her) that ſhe might enter into a Monaſtery of Virgins. O how highly (to the diſgrace of many, who now liue in the world) did this *Queene* conceaue of a Religious and cloyſtred profeſſion! But to proceed further. *Sexburg* (ſiſter to *Ethelred*) being Queene of Kent, after the death of her husband, followed her ſiſter in her religious Courſe. Finally *Alfrede*, Queene of the *Mercians* and *Northumbers*, did lead a moſt auſtere life in a Monaſtery which herſelfe had built, vpon her owne charges, about the yeare 970. Here now I make an end in relating what worthy *Empreſſes* and *Kings* haue left their diademes, to profeſſe

feſſe in Monaſteries, Religion and Deuotion as alſo (as more fitting for me to alledge, in regard of their Sex) what truly Noble *Empreſſes*, and *Queenes*, haue ſhaken for euer hand with the world, to leade a Votary, Monaſticall and retired life.

Moſt happy Emperours and Kings, and moſt happy Empreſſes and Queenes you are who voluntarily relinquiſhed your terreſtriall Crownes, for your gayning of a Celeſtiall Crowne, which at this day all you do enioy and ſhall enioy without any change for all eternity! And now here (*Coſmophila*) you may coniecture by that which is aboue deliuered that your *Sister Celia* by continuing in her much deſired ſtate of a *Religious lyfe*, after her diſſolution of body, ſhall haue whole Troopes of moſt Bleſſed *Empreſſes* and *Queenes*, for her Companions and fellowes in Heauen. For ſeeing both they did, and ſhe will, end their dayes in one and the ſame Religious courſe of lyfe, therefore all of them are to enioy one and the ſame heauenly Reward, and Community of Saints.

Coſmophyla.

Moſt Religious Lady, This your diſcourſe hath giuen me great contentment: And indeed it is moſt ſortable to your ſtate, that you as being a woman, and Gouerneſſe of many Religious women, ſhould be conuerſant in the liues of thoſe women (whether Empreſſes, or Queenes) who leaning all ſouereignty

and

and Royall dignity, did make choyce to liue and dye in your owne Course, and order of lyfe.

But now, *R. Father Confessarius*, to turne my speach againe to you: I would intreat you to enter into a further Ocean, or mayne Sea, in discouering the great *Dignity and worth*, euer attending vpon a Religious Course.

Confessarius.

I am as willing thereto, as you (*Cosmophila*) are; so fruitfully should I esteeme my speaches to be bestowed, if so they could be of force to draw you to acknowledg all that *Honour and worth*, which is found to be in a *Religious life*. Therefore in this place, I will shew that a *Religious life* is (as it were) a Compound made of the mixture of most other vertues. Now if this can be proued (as hereafter I will proue) how worthy, and how much is to be admired the state of Religion? For seeing vertue is the only true wealth (as I may terme it) of a Christian; it must necessarily follow, that who hath more vertue, is more spiritually rich. Well then to passe ouer (as aboue is both proued & granted) that the three *Vertues* of *Chastity*, *Pouerty*, and *Obedience* doe essentially concurre to the true Profession of *Religion*, I will descend to other vertues, euer accompanying that state.

And to begin with the three *Theologicall Vertues*, as they are commonly called, I meane, *Fayth*, *Hope*, and *Charity*. And first touching *Fayth*, (the *Basis*, or foundation of all Fayth.

Chri-

Christianity) most cleare it is, that a *Religious state* cannot be without an assured and eminent Fayth. The reason whereof is this: That Man or Woman, who entereth into Religion, forsaketh all present and temporall benefits & pleasures: for benefits and pleasures which are visible, and future, and so future as that they are not to come, but after a long distance of tyme; this man, or woman relyeth herein only vpon the sole promisse and Word of God: but this no man would do, but he that is fully persuaded, that the future is much more certaine and assured, then that which is present. And this is the greatest Act of *Fayth*, which a Christian can performe.

Hope. What shall we say of *Hope*? *Hope* consisteth in two points; First and principally, in hoping for the glory of Heauen; which though it be to come, yet *Religion* giueth such full pledges thereof; as that it causeth a man to vndergo all difficulties whatsoeuer in a religious life, for his infallible *Hope* of the said glory of Heauen. The second point wherein *Hope* resteth, is to extend and stretch it selfe out to the necessary helps of this present lyfe: but this kind of *Hope* is most fully and actually practized in *Religion*; since what man is there, who reposeth more confidence in the goodnes and prouidence of God for his enioying of sufficiency of necessaries in this lyfe, then a Religious man, who voluntarily depriueth himselfe of all things, which afore he did enioy, or might haue need of; wholy casting himselfe (through a most erected *Hope*) into the hands of God's goodnes,

goodnes, care and benignity, for his prouision of necessaries?

To descend to *Charity*; *Charity* braneheth it selfe into three Parts; One extendeth it selfe towards *God*; the second branch, to those persons who are of the same *Institute*; the last to all men whatsoeuer. Now touching that *Charity* which is borne to *God*, this most clearely shineth in a religious life, since it is the only *Charity* which a man beareth to *God*, which forceth him to abandon the world, for the more strict and seuere seruing of *God*; therefore the force of that *Charity* must be extraordinary great, which surpasseth all the loue, which we beare to our Parents, Brethren, Kindred, Riches, and all worldly temporalities, and finally the loue to our selues; for how were it possible, that one should abandon and forsake all these things for *God*, if he loued not *God* more then all things? Charity.

Touching the second branch of *Charity*, we are to conceaue, that the streames of *Charity* towards our Neighbours, are deriued from the loue of *God*, as from its source and fountaine. And thus these streames runne first towards them, whom *God* hath linked and tyed together in one and the same Communion, or Institute of life, who by reason of this proximity and nearenes, haue euer beene accustomed to call one another, by the sweet and louing name of *Brethren*. Now the ground, whereupon Religious people doe agree and vnite themselues together, is neither nearenes in blood, nor any earthly Contract, but only supernaturall

naturall Loue, which is *Charity*, which *Charity* did first breed this ſtrict aſſociation, and after did maintaine and continue it; For without *Charity* it would inſtantly decay and vaniſh away.

The third Branch of *Charity* (as I ſaid aboue) extendeth it ſelfe to all men; For excepting certaine Inſtitutes in a Religious lyfe which haue reference wholy to Contemplation, all the reſt are ſo wholy bent to the ſeruice of their Neighbours (eſpecially by daily prayers, offered vp for them) that all their Thoughts and Endeuours ſeeme to leane that way, and the Employment of euery religious family giueth ſufficient teſtimony hereof. Thus may a Religious perſon iuſtly ſay, as *S. Paul* ſaid of himſelfe: (o) *We haue made our ſelues ſeruants to all men*. Hitherto of the three ſupreme and ſupernaturall Vertues of *Fayth, Hope, and Charity*. But to come to other Inferiour, and morall vertues.

(o) 1. Cor 9.

Prudence.

And to begin with *Prudence*, defined by *S. Auſtin*, to be the *knowledge of what* (p) *we are to deſire and what we are to flie*. But in what ſtate of lyfe doth *Prudence* more manifeſt and diſcouer it ſelfe, then in a *Religious lyfe*? Now from the definition of *Prudence* giuen aboue by *S. Auſtin*, it inuitably followeth, that perfect *Prudence* cannot reſide or dwell in a ſinners ſoule. The reaſon hereof is, in that perfect *Prudence* is a Vertue, which conſidereth the true End of Man, and doth apply for the purchaſing of that End, vpright aduiſe, vpright iudgment, & vpright Command. Now hereof demand

(p) *Auſtin. l. 83 q 61.*

wherg

where is the true End of man better considered of, and better weighed, then in Religion, where we direct and devote our selues wholy to *God*, and put our selues entirely vnder his Dominion, and power?

To come to *Iustice*. Where doth this vertue more resplendently shyne, then in a *Religious life*? since the Office of *Iustice* consisteth in giuing euery one his owne, and chiefly to *God* that which belongeth to *God*. Now the state of a religious life barreth a man from all Occasion of fraud and deceite, as with-houlding that from another, which belongeth to him; And certainly a true Religious soule would not for a thousand worlds do any Iniustice to another, but infinitly more willingly would rather brooke to suffer wrong, then to do wrong. Iustice.

Temperance is also a morall vertue: whose office is to bridle and curbe the pleasures of the Body, but especially those pleasures, which consist in the senses of touching, and tasting; The first belongs to generation, the desires whereof are in themselues most violent and intemperate; and yet they are all suppressed, or rather extinguished by the vow of perpetuall *Chastity*, and with closing ones selfe within a Monastery. The pleasure of tasting appertaines to the sustenance and maintenance of the body, by eating and drinking: but all exorbitant and superfluous effects hereof, are taken away in *Religion*; Since a religious life confineth it selfe within the limits of necessity, and pouerty, contenting it selfe with such poore and ne- Temperance.

cessary sustenance, meate, and drinke, as is able to maintayne the Body in good and perfect Health, for the better serving of *God*. Thus you see, how this Vertue of *Temperance* is practized in a religious Life.

Fortitude. To come to the last Morall Vertue, which is *Fortitude*. This *Fortitude*, of which we discourse in this place, resteth not in fighting in the field with one; But (it being the strength of the *Iust*) is practized in subduing the flesh, in contradicting a mans owne will, in quenching the delights and pleasures of this life, in contemning all that, which this world so much admireth, for the Hope of an eternall kingdome; briefly in sleighting temporall prosperity, and in patient bearing of Aduersity. Now what state of men in the world is there, who prosecute all these points of spirituall fortitude with greater sedulity, diligence and bent of Will, then a good *Religious man*, or *woman* in their priuate Monasteries?

Thus far of these foure prime and Cardinall Vertues of *Fortitude, Temperance, Iustice, and Prudence*; where you may see *Cosmophila*, how they all are most fully and diligently professed in Religion. I could further instance, how the Vertues of *Patience*, and *Humility*; how the *guifts of the Holy Ghost*, Imeann, *Wisdome, Vnderstanding, Counsell, Pietie*, and *the feare of God*, are all found in a most high degree, in the state of *Religion*. And the reason in generall hereof is, because some of these vertues receaue their Operation from a *Religious loue* towards God; & the rest are the guifts of God, through his loue

towards

towards the *Religious*. But what is already said touching the forme, Vertues both *Theologicall* and *Morall*, may serue at this present to proue, that a *Religious life*, is of that spirituall amplitude and largenes, as that it doth incorporate and combine within it selfe the practise of all Vertues.

Cosmophila.

O how pleasing are these your speaches to my eares! I grant, I now much more honour a *Religious life*, then before my entrance into this house I did. But *Good Father*, since you haue begun this your discourse most charitably in the behalfe of my *Sister* and me (towards her, for her confirmation in iudgment; towards me, for my alteration of iudgment) I coniure, I beseech you, in your affirmed *Scene* with the like charity.

Confessarius.

Well then, to proceed further, for *Charities* sake; since that the Apostle sayth, (q) *Charity both edifyeth, Charity* (r) *is benigne and hopeth all things*: I will in this next place, (for the greater honour of Religion) shew, how a Religious life may well be teamed (for its worth) a kind of *Martyrdome*. This is proued in that it beareth a great resemblance with *Martyrdome*. Furthermore, as *Martyrdome* surpasseth a religious life in diuers points; so in some points a *Religious* life exceedeth *Martyrdome*. To explane these

(q) 1. Cor. 8.

(r) 1. Cor. 13.

things, heere we are to know, that there are two kinds of *Martyrdome*. The one of the *Body*; the other of the *Soule*: That of the body is, when a Man or Woman loose their liues and bloud in protestation and defence of the true fayth. The *Martyrdome* of the Soule or mind is, to dye to the world, and to all the pleasures thereof; and such a person may truly say with the Apostle: (s) *The world is crucifyed to me, and I to the world.* And what persons in the world do suffer a greater *Martyrdome* of the mind, then such as are Religious; since they are *dead* euen to the pleasures of the flesh (I meane to mariage) *dead* to Riches, *dead* to Dominion or rule; Finally *dead* to all the fading comforts & consolations, which the world promiseth?

(s) *Gal. 6.*

Now for the iustifying of these two seuerall *Martyrdomes*, I will insist in the authorities of two or three ancient Fathers. Heere then we find *S Austin* thus to admonish all good Christians: *Let vs* (t) *striue against deadly allurements of sinne, knowing, that Christians cannot want daily Martyrdomes euen in these things: For if Christ be Charity, Truth, and Iustice, he that seeketh to ouerthrow in Man these vertues, is a persecutour, and he a Martyr that is resolued to maintaine them in himself, and defend them in others.* Thus *S. Austin. S. Gregory* is herein more cleare, thus teaching: (u) *There be two kinds of Martyrdome; the one in mind, the other both in mind, and outward worke.* We may adde hereto what *S. Ierome* speaketh, to wit: (x) *Not only the shedding of bloud is to be accounted Martyrdome, but the vnspotted behauiour of a deuout mynd, is a daily Martyrdome.* So far *S. Ierome*;

(t) *Austin. ser mon. 250. de Temp.*

(u) *Gregor. hom. 35. in Euang.*

(x) *Ierom. Ep. 27.*

Now

Now to compare a *Religious life* with *Martyrdome* of the body. It is then to be obserued, that as in many things *Martyrdome* surmounteth a *Religious life*; so also a *Religious life* in some some things euen excelleth *Martyrdome*. To instance this. *Martyrdome* of the body surpasseth a *Religious life*, in that it vndergoeth far greater paines and torments: yet the greater the torments are, they must therein be the shorter, and sooner bring the tormented party to Heauen. But in *Religion*, though the paines be not so violent, yet they are of greater and longer endurance. Againe, *Martyrdome* is to be preferred, in that by meanes thereof a man layeth down of his owne life, which is the deerest pledge that one can per forme for another: *Religion*, though wanting this glory yet it hath the continuance of a most holy life, and store of merits, & this for many yeares, which doth aduance a man very highly in the fauour of the diuine Maiesty, and reward him with many degrees of glory and eternall happines in the Heauenly *Ierusalem*. And according hereto, we may safely affirme, that many yeares spent in holy conuersation and retirednesse of life, will be auanced with a greater increase of Reward, then the loosing of ones life, by only one short Act of Martyrdome, shall procure.

Now this Aduantage *Religion* hath aboue *Martyrdome*: To wit, that a *Religious Course* is a more safe way to gayne Heauen, then the expectation thereof by *Martyrdome*. And the reason hereof is; in that many Christians at the

tyme, when they should suffer Martyrdome for the profession of their Religion, haue shamefully falne from their fayth for the auoyding of their torments. And this is euident out of the writings of S. Cyprian, (y) who reckoneth the miserable tales of seuerall hundreds, who (as he sayth) *were ouercome before the battaile, and ouerthrowne before the encounter.* Now *Religion* lyeth not open to this danger, since a *Religious life* more forteth to a mans disposition, then *Martyrdome* doth; and there be many things in it, which (as aboue is shewed) asswage the hardnes of that Combat.

(y) Cyprian, *Serm de Lapsis.*

Another priuiledge, which a true *Religious life* hath aboue *Martyrdome* is, that whereas *Religion* is euer at hand, and ready to be imbraced at all tymes; *Martyrdome* seldome happeneth; since *Martyrdome* is not in our power; for neither ought we to kill our selues, nor to prouoke others to kill vs; for either of these were an Act of great presumption, and most displeasing to God. Now I will conclude the resemblance betweene *Martyrdome* and a *Religious life*, with this ensuing obseruation: That as without death there is no *Martyrdome* of the body; so a *Religious life* may be said to suffer a certaine kind of death. For seeing death depriueth vs of our wealth, of our friends, and of all manner of things in this world; we in like manner find, that a *Religious Course* doth deprive a man of all the same things; and this so wholy, that a Religious man can no more enioy these things, then if he were truly & really dead. Yet hose a disparity, which maketh in behalfe

behalfe of *Religion*: which is, that when by *Martyrdome* we dye our bodily death, it is an eaſy matter to want all theſe worldly things; becauſe we then going to a better lyfe, ſhall haue no need of them; whereas ſeeing in this life we haue need of them, we forbeare the fruition and enioying of them, with greater difficulty, and reſiſtance of Nature. Therefore to paſſe no further in this ſubiect, I conclude (in reſpect of all that aboue ſaid) that *by Martyrdome he is a man dyed to his Body; by Religion he dyeth to himſelfe.*

Heere now (*Coſmophila*) you may behold the *ſplendour* and *worth* of a *Religious life*, which, as it is ſurpaſſed in ſome reſpects by *Martyrdome*, ſo in others it exceedeth it; I ſay, it exceeds *Martyrdome*, the ſuffering whereof euen our *Sauiour* himſelfe ſo much celebrateth in theſe words: *Greater* (z) *loue, then this no man hath, that a man yeeldeth his life for his friends.* (z) Ioan. 15.

Celia.

O *good Father.* You much ſtrengthen my reſolution with the ſweetnes of theſe your diſcourſes. But now it comes to my mind, that you, one day in diſcourſing to *our Religious Siſters* of the dignity of a *Religious ſtate*, did call it a *Sacrifice* to God: your meaning therein I did not (I confeſſe) nor yet do perfectly vnderſtand. I would deſire your *Reuerence* to expreſſe your ſelfe more plainly, that ſo my ſiſter *Coſmophila*, and my ſelfe may be the better inſtructed therein.

Confessarius.

Well then to come to that point. I did then say nothing, but what I will prove at this present. And first in warrant of that my Assertion, that Religious persons are a continuall *Sacrifice* to God, in respect of the oblation, which they make of themselues to God, I do produce S. *Austin* thus teaching: (a) *A man consecrated & vowed to the Honour of God, is a Sacrifice, in regard that he dyeth to the world, that he may liue to God. When we chastise our body by temperance, if we do it for God, (as we ought to do) to the end, not to yeeld our members weapons of iniquity, but weapons of Iustice to God, it is a Sacrifice. If therefore our body, which is but as it were a seruant and instrument of our soule, be a Sacrifice if the good and pious vse thereof be directed to God; How much more then shall a soule be a Sacrifice, when indeuoreth it self to God, to the end, that being inflamed with the fyre of his loue, it may destroy in it selfe the leauen and impression of all worldly Concupiscence, and be reformed according to his vnchangeable likenes, subiect vnto him? and this Sacrifice shall be so much the more gratefull, by how much it partaketh of his beauty.*

(a) *Austin. l. 10. de Ciuit. Dei c. 6.*

Thus far doth S. *Austin* discourse of this point. With whom agreeth S. *Gregory* thus speaking: (b) *We offer our selues in Sacrifice to God, when we dedicate our life to his diuine Seruice.*

(b) *Gregor. 9. Moral. 3.*

Thus these Fathers; to whom I could alledge the like authorities of many other of them. And now from hence I may infer, That if it be a Sacrifice for vs to offer any thing vp to God the

then doubtlesly to offer vp our selues to God, is truly a Sacrifice; the true Nature and essence whereof consisteth in the absolute oblation of our selues (I meane of our bodies and soules, and of all the powers of our Soules, and particularly in offering vp the power of *our will*:) especially in such an oblation, as being once offered vp, it is not in our power to recall. Now, how most acceptable the sacrifizing of our Soule & body is to God; is proued by this reason following: Yt the Sacrifices of the *Old Testament*, consisting in offering vp to God a Heiffer of three yeare old, or a Calfe, or some other such beast, were so pleasing to God, and that God did receaue those Sacrifices (as the Scripture sayth) *in* (*) *an odour of sweetnes*: How ineffably pleasing then, is that *Spirituall sacrifice*, (which is bought, and redeemed by the most precious bloud of our *Redeemer*) to wit, the sacrifizing of the soule and body to his diuine Maiesty? And can we then doubt, but that he will receaue such a *Sacrifice*, in an incomparably far greater *Odour of sweetnes*, then he receaued those legall sacrifices in the *Old Testament*? with this I conclude this point, since litle more needeth to be added hereto.

(*) *Exod. 29. Eccles. 35.*

Cosmophila.

Very Reuerend Syr, You haue so fully manifested and layed open the worth, dignity, and splendour of a Religious life, as that more in this kind cannot be expected. Neuertheless, seeing all persons are not of one and the same dispo-

disposition of mind; some men (and these of more noble spirits) being affected to things in regard of the true estimation and honour, which is found in the same things; Others againe being carried violently, and with an immoderate loue to such things, or courses of life, which are euer attended on with hope of great benefit, and profit deriued from thence; Therefore to encourage that soule, which beareth an eye chiefly to its own benefit & emolument, I should be desirous to know, what *fruite* may be reaped by professing a *Votary* and *Religious life*; which by other vertuous courses is not so easily obtained. We see how worldly men are carried with an impetuous streame of their Will, to such professions of life, wherein they hope to reap profit, thereby to quench their vnquencheable thirst of gayne. For example, to this end doth the Country-man labour in tillage of his ground; to this end the Marchant-venturer sends his ships with danger to most far and discoasted Nations? Briefly, to this end, our Lawyers in *England* take such indefatigable paines. Since then a *Religious life* infinitly transcendeth in worth these former, and all other temporall courses of life, I doubt not, but that it is furnished with many peculiar *benefits and profits*; and those of so much the more worth, by how much the profession of a *Religious life* is more honourable, then the profession of any kind of mercenary life. Therefore (*Good Syr*) instill, I beseech you, in this subiect; so far forth as you shall thinke good, I do assure you, I do bring with me

(now

(now at this present) greedy and listening eares to your speaches; let them not therefore be defrauded of their expectation.

Confessarius.

As aboue I said, so now againe I will comply with, and satisfy your requests in what I can: and indeed there are so various and diuers *benefits* flowing necessarily from a Religious and professed life, as that I may say with the Poet; *Inopem me copia fecit*, Abundance of matter makes me vncertaine where to begin. Therefore at this present I will rest in presenting to your iudgment the chiefest *fruits & benefits* deriued from a *Religious life*, praetermitting for brevity others of lesse moment.

First then we hould, that a man, or woman by entring into Religion, hath euen by the force and vertue of that Act (as men of ripe age haue by their *Baptisme*) a full remission of all their sinnes committed till then, throughout their whole life. Now, how great, immense, and soueraigne a benefit is this? The greatnes whereof is best discerned by obseruing the effects wrought thereby; to wit, First, the auoyding of Hell-fyer for all Eternity, or the fyer of Purgatory, which is more insufferable (as *S. Austin* affirmeth) then any torments in this world can be. Secondly, the obtayning of the kingdome of Heauen, which is reserued and giuen only to those, whose sinnes are remitted and forgiuen. I will add heere to this one consideration. That if we be in re-

Remission of sinnes.

deeme

deeme but only one mortall sinne, how great paines ought we to take, in procuring a true Cõtrition therof, in afflicting our bodies with fasting, disciplines, and other such austerities? how impreciable then, and most worthy to be esteemed, is that Course of life wherein a man or woman entring into, doth by that one Act, deface and cancell out, not one only sinne, but all sinnes and lesser imperfections, which a sinfull or carelesse Christian hath committed afore all his life tyme?

Now that the Profession of *a Religious life*, doth euen by vertue of that Act, blot out all sinnes afore committed. *Thomas Aquinas* (that great Doctour, and Saint) thus disputeth: *If* (c) *Almes-deedes do deliuer sinnes (as we find in the Prophet Daniel how much more shall the entrance into Religion worke the same effect? Which kind of voluntary Penance is not only of equall worth with Almes-deedes, but doth greatly exceed it.* And the reason hereof *S. Thomas* giueth in another place in these words: (d) *When we enter into Religion our sinnes are forgiuen vs; but yet so, as that we on our part laydowne a reall and very great satisfaction for them. For when we deliuer vp our will wholy to God, and bequeath our selues to his seruice, we giue him that which is more deare vnto vs, then all things els in the world; and consequently we do fully satisfy for all sinnes that are past.* Thus *S. Thomas.* And vpon this ground it is, that *S. Ierome* (e) calleth entring into a religious life, *a second Baptisme*; and this with good Reason, since in religion we dye to the World, in Baptisme we dye to sinne.

(c) *S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 188. art. 3.*

(d) *S. Thom. 4. d. 4. q. 3. art. 3.*

(e) *Ierom. Ep. 25.*

Thus farre (Gossophila) of the first fruite of a Reli-

Religious life; the greatnes whereof who can truly apprehend? O if a Man by some traiterous and disloyall Act to his Prince, were enchayned, and were daily to suffer insupportable torments for such his Cryme: Or if one were infinitly indebted to his Creditours, and far more then all his temporall state were able to discharge, how happy would that first man, or this other thinke themselues to be, if so the one could be set at liberty from his daily punishment, and the other discharged of all his debts, by performing *one only Act*, which should be most gratefull to the Prince of the one, and to the Creditours of the other? The Case is here a like: We all by sinne commit a spirituall treason towards God, and also by them, we daily increase the heape of our debts, that is, our Transgressions, for which we say in our Lords Prayer, *Forgiue vs our trespasses.* And yet all the punishments due to be inflicted vpon vs, and all the debts we owe to God, may be taken away and discharged by one *only Act* of entring into Religion. How sottish then, and stupid are most men, who cannot, or at least will not, apprehend the benefit thereof? And thus briefly to proue, that the Act of first entring into a Religious life (if other requisite circumstances be not wanting) doth obliterate and blot out all sinnes afore committed, and that, in that respect, it is iustly called, *A second Baptisme.*

Cæso-

Cosmophila.

Good Father, neuer can a subiect of this Nature, thus learnedly discoursed of by you, breed any satiety to my Eares, nor can they euer be cloyed therewith: such inexplicable pleasures I take therein, & so strongly haue your words deliuered of the estate of a Religious life, inuaded my iudgment; making it most contrary (so farre as concernes Religion) to that vnworthy conceyte I had thereof, at my first entrance into this vertuous Monastery: But presuming of your voluntary continuance in your former Charity, touching the more fully testifying of my weake and feminine iudgment herein, I would desire you to descend to the displaying of other *fruits* & *benefits*, springing from the roote of a Religious life.

Confessarius.

Remission of paines, in Purgatory.

Most willingly. The next *benefit* then, wherein I will insist is, to shew that a *Religious life* through Gods most mercifull acceptance thereof, doth often expiate and make satisfaction for all sinne, whose temporal punishmẽts (after the guilt of eternall damnation is remitted) are to be suffered either in this world, or in the next, in the fyre of *Purgatory*. That a *Religious life* is of this efficacy and vertue, is thus proued. Yf a *Religious life* can procure a full remission of all sinnes, in respect of eternall damnation due to our sinnes, as aboue I haue shewed, it doth

doth; then much more a *Religious life*, is of force to procure the leſſe; that is, to cancell and blot out all temporall puniſhment: Since the torments in *Purgatory*, are ſo much inferiour to euerlaſting damnation, as *tyme* is inferiour to all *Eternity*; and to endure torments for certaine yeares only, is more ſufferable, then to endure torments for euer and without End. And the leſſe we are here to admire, that *a Religious life* can take away all the paines of *Purgatory*, if ſo we call to mind, that this life is a ſtate of *Pennance*, and ſo commonly called, in regard that moſt of the tyme thereof is beſtowed in bewayling and lamenting the ſinnes of our life, and in repairing the faults and negligences of former yeares.

Now the greatnes of this benefit of a *Religious life* (if we apprehend two things touching *Purgatory*) will more eaſely appeare. Firſt, the greatnes of thoſe temporall torments in *Purgatory*: Secondly, if we conceaue, that there are very few perſons, (and thoſe only of extraordinary ſanctity) which doe eſcape the fyer of *Purgatory*. Now touching the firſt point, I will enlarge my diſcourſe with the teſtimonies and iudgment of *S. Auſtin*, deliuered vpon this point. Well then let vs heare of what iudgment *S. Auſtin* is herein, who thus writeth of the atrocity of the paines of Purgatory: (f) *Becauſe* (g) *S. Paul affirmeth, that they* (meaning thoſe in *Purgatory*) *do ſuffer detriment, but yet they ſhall be ſaued, as by fyre: Therefore* (ſaith *S. Auſtin*) *this fyre is contemned: but certainly, though they ſhall be ſaued by it; yet is this fyre more grie-*

(f) *Auſt. in Pſalm.* 37.
(g) 1. *Cor.* 3.

uous, then whatsoeuer a man can suffer in this life; albeit you know how great and intollerable things men haue, and can suffer.

(h) *Austin. homil. 16. ex 50. homil.*

Againe S. (h) *Austin* in another place thus: *They, which haue done things worthy of temporall punishment, (whom the Apostle sayth, shall be saued by fyre) must passe through a fiery riuer, and most horrible shallowes of buring flames.* Finally the same *Father* thus further discourseth hereof in these words: *If (i) a sinner by repentance and Conuersion escape death, and obtayneth life, yet for all this I cannot promise him, that he shall escape all payne or punishment, which must be suffered in Purgatory fyre; & this fyre (I tell you) though it be not euerlasting, yet it is passing grieuous, for it doth exceed all paines, that man can suffer in this life.*

(i) *Austin. lib. de vera & falsa pœnitentia, c. 18.*

In this place now I will descend to shew, that most holy Seruants of God haue been greatly afrayd of the paines of this *purging* fyre; Now if such men of eminency for vertue and Piety, haue stood in such feare and horrour thereof, what then shall become almost of all Lay-people, who liue in the world, and forbeare to take the Course of *Religious life*, which is very auayleable to preuent and free them from that raging fyre? I will then first set downe the words of *S. Gregory* touching the dread, that the *Prophet Dauid* had of the temporall fyre of *Purgatory*: Thus then he writeth, expounding those words of *Dauid*: (k) *O Lord, rebuke me not in thy fury, nor correct me in thy wrath. This is (sayth S. Gregory) as if he had said, I know, that after this life some must be clensed by purging fyre, and others must receaue Sentence of eternall*

(k) *In Psalm. 3. Pœnit. Psalm. 27.*

hell damnation. But because I esteeme that purging fyre (though it be transitory) to be more intollerable, then all the tribulation, which in this lyfe may be suffered; Therefore I only do not desire, not to be rebuked in the fury of eternall damnation, but also I greatly feare to be purged in the wrath of transitory Correction: Thus *S. Gregory*; From whose words we may conceaue in what feare of *Purgatory* both *David*, as also *S. Gregory* himselfe (allowing the iudgement of *David*) did stand.

S. Ambrose (that Holy Father) feared no lesse, but that he might suffer the paines of *Purgatory*; who thus writeth of himselfe: (l) *O Lord, if thou reserue any thing in me to be reuenged in the next lyfe, yet I humbly beseech thee, that thou giue me not vp to the power of wicked spirits, whiles thou wypest away my sinnes by the paines of Purgatory.* I will conclude with *S. Bernard*, who in these passionate words following, discouereth his conceaued dread and horrour of suffering the temporall paines of fyre in the next life: (m) *O would God, some man would now afore hand prouide for my head abundance of Water, and to mine Eyes a fountayne of teares; for so perhaps the burning fyre should take no hould, where running teares had cleansed before.*

(l) *Ambros. præcat. præparat. ad Missam.*

(m) *Bernard. serm. de Sex tribul cap. 16. & 55. in Cant.*

Thus far (*Cosmophila*) of this subiect; And now from hence I present to your iudgment the consideration of two points. First, the violent extremity of the paines of *Purgatory*; Secondly, that the most holy men who haue liued, stood most fearefull, that their liues and Actions should be tried, refyned & purged in this fyre. Now both these two passages being

moſt euident, (and aboue by me ſo cleared) what dread then may Lay-people (ſuch as your ſelfe *Coſmophila* is) conceaue of this fyre? Wherein all the Idle words (to apply my ſpeach particularly to your Sex) of yong Gentle-women, all their amarous Conceites, and diſcourſes with men, all multitude of lighter ſinnes, all deſire of ſuperfluous bravery in apparell, and new fathions, all idle ſpending of ſeuerall howers in the day for adorning and beautifying of their faces and bodies, to be gazed on by men, ſhalbe purged? and for how many yeares God himſelfe only knoweth. Yf a man ſhould put his hand into the fyre, but for the ſpace of a quarter of an hower, what inſupportable paines ſhould he endure? Yet all this were but a flea-byting in regard of the torments of Purgatory, continuing for many yeares. Now then to turne & apply my ſpeach to the beginning of this mayne paſſage: *Yf a Religious life* be ſo worthy in it ſelfe, and of ſuch efficacy, (as being a ſtate of *Continuall Penance*) as that by it a Religious perſon may labour daily to cancell his ſinnes, and to eſcape the paines both of Hell, & *Purgatory*; how weake then is the iudgment of all thoſe, who ſleight and prize litle the priuiledges granted by God to ſuch a life? And on the contrary ſyde, how happy (*Coſmophila*) is your *Sifter Celia*, in chooſing this her retired and votary life, for her better auoiding of all the former threatned dangers?

Abbesse.

Reuerend Father Confessarius, and you *Cosmophile*, with both your good leaues, I will make bold to relate one *Fruite* or benefit of a Religious life; and hereto I am the more willing, in that out of my owne experience and gouerment ouer others, I find the *Fruit* by me here vnderstood, to be most exactly practized by all those religious sisters, who liue vnder my charge. This benefit, whereof I here speake, is an *Humble lowlines* of mind, in the Professours of a votary life. And the greatnes of this vertue is of so large an extent, as that *S. Bernard* houlds it to be a signe of predestination; who in one of his Sermons, turneth his speach to his owne Brethren, and thus speaketh: *Dearely* (n) *beloued, persever in the Course allready vndertaken; that by Humility, you may ascend to Sublimity. This is the way, and there is no other way, but it. He that goeth otherwise, doth rather fall: for Humility exalteth; Humility leades to life.* Thus *S. Bernard*. The truth whereof from experience appeareth; seeing we may daily obserue, that that Man, or Woman, who is most poore in spirit (that is most humble) is commonly most rich in the guifts of the spirit; and according hereto (if so I remember the words) the Prophet Dauid thus speaketh: *Our* (o) *Lord is high, and regardeth humble things.*

Lowlinesse of mind, or Humility.

(n) *Bernard. serm. 2. de Ascensione.*

(o) *Psal. 112.*

Now for the further displaying of the great fruit of *Humility*, we may call to mind, that it preuenteth many dangers of the soule, vnto

which dangers high minded persons lye open. *Humility* also ministreth many helpes to eternall Saluations: for they, that are in honour & Elation of state, are euer in great danger of a headlong falling; whereas *a good humble Soule* reposeth it selfe most willingly in the lowest place, and is thereby more remote from any spirituall slipping downe. And by this we may gather how much we are obliged to *Religion*, whereby keeping vs out of the trafficke and commerse of the eyes of men, and from all worldly aduancements, we rest in a holy and wholesome place of Refuge; we being by this meanes made meere strangers to the World, and the World to vs.

And touching the practise of this precious vertue of *Humility*, (if I may speake it in all sobriety of iudgment,) it is most exactly and daily put in execution by the *Sisters* of this our poore Monastery. For (though I say it) there are diuers *Sisters* here, worthily for their parentage descended; and yet they euen striue & contend (through a pious and religious Emulation) which of them shall performe the most and lowest workes of *Humility*. How often (to my owne great edification) haue I commanded such, or such a *Sister* of no meane Descent, to vndergoe this or that meane office in our house? Yea so willingly hath each of them with a ready & smiling consent performed what I appointed, as that, though I be their vnworthy *Gouerneſſe*, yet I may bouldly pronounce, that they are my Instructours in the practise of this Vertue. And for the more certainty hereof,

dare appeale to the iudgment of you (*Sister Celia*) whose eyes are able to depose the daily truth, of what I heere say; but (though I be their Superiour) herein I will not glory in our selues, but according to the Apostles words, (p) 1. Cor. 1. 1 (p) *will glory in our Lord.*

Cælia.

I freely auerre, that my owne sight, since my first entrance into this holy House, hath obserued strange and vnexpected Examples of this kind. And indeed to speake vnder both your licences, I do find not only *Humility*, but many other Vertues to be daily exercised among our *Sisters*, to the great strengthning and encouraging of me, in this my selected life. So as I may iustly terme this Monastery (and no doubt, all other well gouerned Monasteries, either of Men, or Women) a very *Schoole of Vertue*. For besides the three Theologicall vertues (to wit, *Faith, Hope*, and *Charity*) as also besides the three essentiall vowes of a religious life, (I meane of *Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience*) finally besides *Humility* (aboue spoken of) what other vertue, sorting to a Christian life, is there not practised by the blessed Nunnes of this Monastery, and this in a high degree? The due Consideration of which point, (I grant) hath increased my thirst in imbracing this most happy life, and in loathing the world, and all the fruitles pleasures thereof. O deare Sister *Cosmophila*, I would to God, I were daily to endure no small paines of my

body (and this for no short tyme) that you had so fully seene in this place, the practize of vertue, as I haue done; and that the sight thereof had made so deep an impression both in your *Vnderstanding* and *Will*, as to my infinit comfort (through the vnspeakable goodnes of his diuine Maiesty) it hath done in mine; Then (*Good sister*) I shold be assured that you would not so much depresse and vnderualew the state of a *Religious life*, as in the beginning of this discourse you did. Yea I would not be altogether in dispayre, but that your selfe, for the Eternall good and wellfare of your soule, (with a pious contempt of all those trifling allurements aboue mentioned by you, as Marriage, splendour in apparell, attendance, and the like) might perhaps imbrace the same religious Course of life with me.

But *Reuerend Father*, (to turne my speach to you) your Reuerence may proceede further (if so you shall thinke good) in vnfoulding the fruits and benefits of Religion; My *sister* seemes by her words to take no small delight therein, and as for my selfe (to the greater nourishment of my spirituall life) I doe euen feed vpon these your vertuous and religious discourses.

Confessarius.

I will not be sparing of my labour herein. But because this *Scene* of myne, in setting downe the *benefits* and commodities arising by a *Religious life*, hath beene somewhat long, there-

therefore I will passe ouer many *fruits* thereof, as *that a man doth discharge his debt, in giuing himselfe wholy to God, in Religious state. That Gods peculiar care and protection is ouer those, who liue in a Religious lyfe. That the prayers of Religious persons are easely heard. That among religious people there is mutuall communication of Good workes. That in a Religious state, the Commandements of God bynding vnder the penalty of damnation, are far more easely kept, then in the state of the Layty. That there is greater merit of one and the same good worke, performed by a Religious person, then the same is being performed in a Lay person, and this by vertue of a Religious state. That those, who are truly Religious people, do euer the Will of God. That a Religious life* (as aboue is partly shewed) *cutteth off, and preuenteth all occasion of sinne. That by a Religious state we flie the world, and all the dangers thereof.* All those particular points (I say) I will pretermit to enlarge my selfe vpon, and I will close this longe Passage, touching the *Fruits* and benefits of a Religious life, by heere the wing, That one maine or chief *Fruite* thereof is, *that it promiseth a safe, quiet, and happy death.* The greatnes of which benefit what tongue can expresse, or vnderstanding conceaue, since Gods sacred writ assureth vs, (q) *Blessed are they, that dye in our Lord?*

Religion promiseth a safe and quiet death.

(q) *Apocal.* 14.

Now for the better & more full apprehension of this so inexplicable a benefit, we are to call to mind, that at the hower of our death three things are accustomed to afflict vs. The first, Death it selfe; the remembrance whereof is regard, that thereby we are to leaue the world, and all it's temporall pleasures, be-

teth euen a horrour in Mans Nature; and the-
fore it is most truly said by the *Wiseman*, tha
the remembrance (*) *of Death is bitter*. The secon
reason making death so vnpleasing is, tha
that is the tyme, when the Deuill is most ac
customed to tempt a Soule, with his wicke
suggestions. The third (and most dreadfull) i
the astonishing feare of the last Sentence, o
doome of a Soule, which instantly followe
after death. Now the discontents and terrou
of all these three things, are much more miti
gated, sweetned, and lessned in Religion, the
they are (or commonly can be) in the deat
of Lay persons.

(*) Ecclesiast. 41.

To begin with the first; This griefe in th
Laity, proceedeth, that by death, we are
leaue all worldly Riches, states, honours, y
wife and children. Finally that the soule m
leaue the body, they two hauing liued so lon
as most deare friends. Now most of this grie
is taken away in one, dying in the state of
Religious life; And the reason hereof is, t
cause when a Religious man, or Woman b
their professed state, haue once forsaken th
world they haue giuen then aforehand; the
last farewell to all Riches, Honours, neeren
of kindred, and the like; and then seeing the
haue parted with all these allurements afore,
their first entering into Religion, it cannot
any great griefe the second tyme, to part wi
them, to wit, at the tyme of their death.

Now touching the second point, which
the Assaults and temptations, with which
Enemy of Mans Soule is accustomed to tro

leach one at his death, we dare say. That if here be any kind of men, that are not troubled at that tyme, or but very little with his wicked suggestions, the Religious Man is that man. And this is thus proued: First, in that the goodnes of God, will not suffer himselfe to leaue and forsake that person, in that last point of a most dangerous state, vpon which person God hath in his lyfe tyme heaped so many spirituall graces and fauours, as are necessarily concurring for ones entring into a Religious state. Secondly I maintayne, that it is most forting and agreeable euen to the Iustice of God, to protect, and defend in that dangerous hower, that person, who with all sincerity and simplicity of hart hath vowed himselfe, (I meane both his Body, Soule, and all the powers thereof) to a most strict, seuere, and Religious Course of seruing his diuine Maiesty. Wherefore no good *Religious person* hath iust reason to feare, but that God at the hower of his death will couer him vnder the wings of his protection, and will strengthen his Soule with internall comfort.

To the lessening or breaking of the forces of the former temptations of the Deuill at the tyme of a *Religious Mans* death, we may add the comfort and consolation, which euery Religious man at that hower receaueth of his *Brethren*, & euery Religious Woman of her *Sisters*. This I meane, by the assistance of their *Brethren* and *Sisters*; which assistance consisteth in their exhortations, Counsell, and continuall prayers, which all wayes, but especially at the instant

instant of death, are very powerfull to an mate vs in hope, and to repell the fierce a tempts of the Enemy.

Concerning the third & last point, whic maketh death most terrible, which is the fear of the dreadfull doome, which immediatl followeth the separation of the body from th soule: The feare of which doome is much di minished by the hope of Saluation, which Religious man may more securely promise t himselfe, then any Lay person for the mo part can. And this Hope is grounded princi pally vpon two points. First, that it is presu med, that a Religious Man is not guilty t himselfe of any mortall and grieuous sinne. Se condly, his Hope is confirmed with the re membrance of the aboundance of his goo works, during his lyfe tyme: neither of whic can be wanting in a Religious Course. An hereupon we read *S. Ierome*, exhorting *Iulia* to a Religious life, thus to write to him: (1) *Happy is that man, and worthy of all blessednes, who old age ouertaketh seruing Christ; whom the last da shall fynd fighting vnder our Sauiour, or to whom shall be said; Thou hast receaued ill things in thy life but now shalt reioyce.*

(1) Ierome Epist. 34.

Hitherto (worthy *Cosmophila*) I haue labo red both for your owne, and your *Sister Cæli* her spirituall good, in discoursing of a *Religiou state*. And briefly to recall to our memor what hath passed in our former words ther of, euen from the beginning of our speach First, you may remember, that I did discoue the weakenes and insufficiency of all thos

Reason

reasons and Obiections, insisted vpon by ou, with which your Father so much labo- d to impugne (at least to disesteeme, and dis- lew) a *Votary and Monasticall lyfe*. After that, shewed the worth of that kind of life, by set- ng downe the three Essentiall Vowes (I eane, of *Chastity*, *Poverty*, *and Obedience*) wher- pon a Religious life is grounded or seated. hat done, I did spend divers passages of each, in laying open the *Excellency*, *Antiquity*, *onour*, *Splendour*, and *Dignity* of the same kind life. And now in this last place, I have ran- ed togeather divers of the chiefest and most rincipall *Fruits*, and benefits, ever necessarily tending vpon a Religious state. So as now I now not, what more can needfully be said uching this subiect.

That your *Sister Celia* hath by these my ords, strengthened and fortifyed her pious esolution, for imbracing this course of lyfe, I st fully assured: Now what operation my eaches haue found in you (*Cosmophila*) will st appeare by your owne relation. Only I ould be glad, (as through some words by u aboue vttered I partly hope) if so by force these my speaches, your Iudgment might fully induced, only to haue a true and wor- y conceite of a Religious life.

Cosmophila.

Only to haue a true and worthy conceite of a Re- ous life! O God (if so I may say without ence) I must thinke (*Deare Syr*) you doe

partly

partly wrong me, in restrayning my Iudg
ment to such niggardly limits of affection to
wards *Religion*: Therfore *most Reuerend Syr*, an
you *most Vertuous Lady*, as also you, my *deare*
Sister Celia; I say vnto you all three, that h
therto I haue in part concealed, what the for
of this our discourse hath stealingly, and by de
grees wrought in my Soule. Now I will free
ly vnbreast, and lay open my most inward
thoughts to you all: My Iudgment is whol
vanquished: I freely confesse, that I am per
suaded, that no other course of life is more pro
pitious and graceful in the sight of God, the
a *Religious state*. But (which is the chiefest poin
of this my acknowledgment, euer bid till th
instant) My *Will*, (My *Will* I say) burnet
with a fiery and vnquencheable desire to im
plant my selfe with my *Sister*, in this so much
celebrated state.

I speake not this out of a womanish Pa
sion; I speake it out of true Iudgment, for
see no other more short Cut, for arriuing t
Heauen, then by a *Religious life*. Therefor
(*Most Reuerend Confessarius*, and most worth
Lady Abbesse) here vpon my knees I prostra
my soule before God, my Body before yo
both, humbly (most humbly) beseeching yo
that I may be receaued as a Religious Wo
man, into this your Monastery. No *deare siste*
you shall not need to take any daily corpora
penance for any change of my former iudg
ment (as most kindly you wished in your la
words) I am wholy yours without any suc
forced necessity.

O swe

O *sweet Iesus*, what a celestiall life is this, described by you (*Good Syr!*) The Common sentence is, that there is but *one Heauen*; but I say there be *two Heauens*; The one, heere vpon Earth in a *Religious Monastery*, seruing as a *Type* of the second; The other, that most happy & blessed kingdome aboue, wherein God with all his Saints doth raigne for all Eternity; which supreme *Heauen* is the reward of all such, as here liue vertuously to their last moment of breathing, in this terrene *Heauen*. O how happy then is he, or she, who betrampleth vnder their feete all pleasures, benefits, and other glorious miseries of this life, and do willingly imbrace a Religious course; making themselues by this meanes, with continuing a life sortable to their Course, vndoubted heires to the Kingdome of God? Know you then any reason, *Reuerend Lady*, and you *Father Confessarius*, why I may not range my selfe, within the number of these Happy Ones? I know you do not. And I hope his *Diuine Maiesty* will be as ready both to inspire good resolutions in me, and to giue me grace to assent to his inspiratiõs, as he hath already done to my owne *Sister* heere, and to many thousands more. Therefore once more I say, take full notice (all you three,) That from this present hower, I am fully resolued to abandon the World, and all the transitory inuitements thereof, and to become a *Recluse*, or Religious Woman (vnder your licence and consent) in this your Monastery.

Farewell therfore, thou *Deceitfull World* for euer

euer after, withall thy flattering blandishmē
Farewell, *Most deare Parents*, more carefull (
leare) of my body, then of my soule. Farewe
all expectation of enioying part of your sta
and Lands. I care not for inheriting of tem
poralities, Let me inherit *Eternity*, and Hea
uen: Thither my thoughts shall hereafter b
bent: Thereupon the Eyes of my vnderstan
(s) Psal. 122. ding, as the *Eyes*(s) *of a handmaid vpon the hand of her mistris*, thalbe fixed. And in place of al
these dangerous illaqueations and Nets, ser
uing only to entangle the soule; Come m
Sweet Iesus, and knock at the dore of my H
and I will be ready to open vnto thee. Com
all you blessed Saints in Heauen (and espe
cially thou *Queene of Heauen*, Mother of my Sa
uiour) and defend, and guard me with you
impetrations and prayers, in this my pio
Resolution. To conclude, come into my Sou
all those celestiall consolations, not to b
communicated to flesh and bloud; and fill v
those Roomes of my soule, which heretofor
temporall delights were accustomed to po
sesse. God hath at this tyme euen arrested m
in this Monastery, with the hand of his hol
Prouidence, and Benignity; from hence it
his pleasure I shall neuer stir. Here I hau
found God, so as I may well say with hol
(t) Cant. 3. writ: (t) *I haue found him, I haue taken hould
him, and I will not let him goe.*

And to turne my words to you, deare *Sist
Celia*: Pardon my rough and harth speaches
giuen to you in the beginning; I was the
ouer earnest (I confesse) in my parents behal
wit

with you, and did not rightly ballance toge-
her the duty we owe to God, and the duty
e owe to our Parents. What I before ſpake,
ſpake in ignorance; Let ignorance then
cuſe me. And as hitherto we haue beene *Si-*
ers in Nature, ſo hereafter I hope we ſhall be
ſters in Religion, by imbracing the ſame kind
a Religious life in this your Monaſtery. No
ore will I be your *Sister Coſmophila*, but euer
the tyme hereafter (vpon my receauing of
e Sacrament of *Confirmation*, which as yet I
ue not) your ſiſter *Chriſtophila*; Since all my
ue, my affection, my vaſſallage of ſoule and
dy, I moſt humbly bellow vpon my deare
deemer Ieſus Chriſt.

Confeſſarius.

Riſe vp, good *Coſmophila* (for as yet we will
ayne in you that Name.) I much ioy at this
ppy change in you, and that my former
ords haue had ſuch an influence and power
er your iudgement, as to beget in you ſuch
vnexpected alteration.

Abbeſſe.

And I as fully congratulate this your deter-
nation, and ſhalbe ready to further it to my
wer, ſo far forth as true iudgment ſhall lead
to.

Celia.

And thinke you *Deare sister*, that I do not s
bound with an excesse of ioy, to see you be
come now what you are, and to be so muc
different from your former selfe? Alas my fear
afore was, that you would beare an vnalter
ble disaffection to my course of life. Must
not then infinitly reioyce to see you thus alt
red in iudgment? But let vs both therefo
giue thankes to him, who at his pleasure is ab
to cause, *that crooked* (u) *things shal become straigh*
and rough wayes playne.

(u) Luc. 3.

Abbesse.

Though we all much reioyce at this you
happy determination: yet what satisfactio
can you giue to your Father, who perhaps w
thinke himselfe wronged by this our Mona
stery, in detayning two of his daughters, co
trary to his mind and pleasure. Therefore t
preuent all vniust and suspitious Aspertion
which otherwise may be layd vpon ou
House, and particularly vpon our *Confessari*
and my selfe, I should hould it partly conue
nient; that you returne into *England* for th
tyme, to get your parents good consent here
to. And if absolutely they refuse to giue thei
consent, then nettertheleise you may return
backe, continuing in this your pious resolu
tion: For we read, (x) *God must be obeyed, rath*
then man.

(x) Act. 5.

Con

Confessarius.

I conspire wholy in Iudgment with *the La-*
bresse herein; So desirous I am, that our Mo-
nuc altery should auoid all obloquy, into which
ea erhaps, by reason of others wrongfully mis-
er erpreting our sincere Intentions, it might
st nne. Therefore *Cosmophila* (though we ab-
lt olutaly leaue the busines to your selfe) I hould
fo not amisse for you to returne into England,
ab to the end to get the allowance and approba-
gh ion of your parents in this matter.

Cosmophila.

Both of you (I see) speake this by way of
on ersuasion, not by way of command; therfore
io ou both must pardon me, if I proceed con-
wi rariwise herein. O, I feare, neither of you do
na ully know, the snares & temptations, which
on ong Gentlewomen (when they once in-
t tend to serue God truly, and sincerely, and es-
ns ecially, when they resolue absolutely to
ou reake with the world) do oftentimes to their
ri piritual domage find in England. I am guil-
ue y of my owne weakenes; and therefore loath
th shall be (by my returne into *England*) to ex-
re pose my soule to all those assaults, which may
ei e planted against it: As, the contrary com-
n mand of parents, attended on with teares and
ü ighs; the inuitements rysing from enioying a
h very worthy temporall state, and the far grea-
ter in regard of my *Sister Celia*, her resolution,

and thereby my parents whole state to be le
to me alone; Marriage, and hope of Childre
thereby; Finally the vndermining-battery
all other worldly delights and honours;
know not, if I should returne into *Englan*
what strength, all, or any of these forcible mo
tiues might haue ouer my Soule. Therefore
hould it most secure for me in this place
stay, and to put in present execution the piou
motions, which his *Diuine Goodnes* hath vouch
safed to inspire into me.

I will relate to you examples of two *worth*
Catholike Gentlewomen, whose vnexpected E
uents or Fortunes beget a feare in me for put
ting of (though it be but for a short tyme) an
delaying the practizing of Gods holy Will
touching the spirituall courses of ones soule
And what is deliuered of these *two Gentlewo*
men, is truly deliuered (I speake in all since
rity) without any fiction, or imagining tha
to happen to them, which really did not hap
pen? for the *Relatour* hereof was well acquain
ted with them both.

The first is, of a *Yong Gentlewoman*, to whom
was left by her deceased Father (a man of
great estate, and of very good ranke) two
thousand and fiue hundred pounds for he
portion: *This Gentlewoman* would oftentime
make great ouertures, and shewes of her de
sire to enter into a religious state; and many
holy inspirations from God (no doubt) fi
had thereto. But she going vp to *London* out
of her owne Country (whether to the end o
taking that blessed course, or not, I certainly
know

know not) did fall in acquaintance with a yong Gentleman, far vndeserving her, or her estate or portion: Him she maried, and within the compasse of a yeare had a Child by him, and both she and the Child dyed in Child-bed, and so he went freely away with her good portion.

The other was a *Gentlewoman*, descended from a very honourable Lemme. This *Gentlewoman* being maried, her first husband dyed, & did leaue her a very fayre Iointure. Presently vpon the death of her husband, nothing was with her so frequent in her speaches, as a *Monastery*, with an absolute Resolution to enter into Religion. This *Gentlewoman* also (as the former) making a iourney to *London* (a fit place for Women to get bad Husbands) wrought meanes to a worthy Gentleman, (from whose mouth I heard it) that he would procure passage for her going ouer into the low-Countryes. Well, it so vnfortunately happened, that in the meane time she grew acquainted with a yonger brother of good descent, but of most small meanes, or otherwise of desert. To conclude, to him she espoused herselfe, and now at this present day they liue parted with great discontent, he raising about the halfe of her yearely means allotted to him, and she the rest; she so liuing in so abundance, if not in want. O how happy were *two Gentlewomen* had beene, if they had prosecuted their good desires proceeding from God, with all promptitude of putting them in execution, and had not deferred the tyme!

They both then might haue spent many yeares in a pious and Religious Course; furthering others in their Monastery (and thereby their owne soules) with what was more then needfull to their owne maintenance.

Now, *Good Madame*, and you *Reuerend Father*, who both perswade me to returne into *England*, procuring my Parents consent to this my late Vocation; heere I demand of you both: What greater security can I promise to my selfe, in perseuering in this my intended course, then these two former *Gentlewomen* could? They had temptations of Mariage, so I may haue the same; They were subiect to the amarous passion of Loue, I cannot say, I am naturally free from it. In the end, they gaue the bridle to their affections, with lesse benefit in all likelyhood to their owne Soules; *O sweet Iesus* giue me grace, that their examples may be a (y) *Apoc. 3.* forewarning and document to me, *that I may open the doore to thy first call, at what time thou maist supp with my soule*, and that I may put in practize without any delay, the good Motions & inspirations, which thou hast powred into my Soule! Therefore neither of you both, I humbly beseech you (as you prize the eternall welfare of my Soule) seeke to perswade me to goe back into *England*, though with expectation of a speedy returne. I grant I am weake; suffer me then to ouercome temptations rather by flying from them, then by a constant resistance of them.

Abbesse

Abbesse.

Well, good *Cosmophila*, seeing you are so much auerted from your returne into *England*, I (and I presume that our *Reuerend Confessarius* will be also yealding hereto) doe giue our full consents for your stay here, and that you shall not returne back to your Parents. Neuertheleſſe I would it moſt forting, euen in reſpect of your duty towards them, as alſo in true iudgment, that at leaſt by letters, both your *Sister Celia* and your ſelfe, do labour to giue them all ſatisfaction poſſible, to appeaſe their otherwiſe afflicted minds.

Celia.

I do hould this your admonition (*Good Madame*) of writing to our Parents, to be moſt neceſſary; for ſeeing they are our parents, we owe to them all true duty, and this without any offence to him, who is the *Common Parent* of *all*; ſince certaine it is, that, *Grace doth not deſtroy Nature*.

Cosmophyla.

I do much approue both your iudgments herein, and do deſire that it may be performed. Yet one thing I could with to be added hereto; That is, that *Reuerend Father Confeſſarius* heere would be pleaſed to write alſo to my Father, a mouing Letter from himſelfe, that

thereby my Father and Mother might the more easely and dispationatly apptehend the first report of both our settled Resolutions. He will be able (no doubt) by force both of diuine and humane Authorities, euen to conuince my Fathers & Mothers iudgment, touching the Election of this our Religious course, and consequently to ease and pacify their minds. And indeed, as concerning my selfe in particular, it seemes to me, that you (*Reuerend Syr*) do in some sort stand obliged to performe, what I here desire. For since it is the force of your pious and vertuous discourse, which hath first wrought so much vpon my Soule, as to induce it (I hope irreuocably) to the vndergoing of a *Religious life*; that therefore you are euen in your owne reputation, boūd to giue my Father by your letters full satisfaction, for the warranting of this my chosen State.

Confessarius.

Good *Cosmophila*, I will not be wanting in any thing to satisfy your desire, or to aduance your spirituall good. Therefore I will not only write to your parents in both your behalfs, (howsoeuer, I know not how they will respect the letters of a meere stranger) but I will withall send to them in writing the whole *Discourse*, which hath passed betweene you (*Cosmophila*) and my selfe, to tiye thereby, if it may in any sort sway with them. All which shalbe sent together with your owne letters

to them. But now you must giue me leaue to acquaint you, before you and I do write to your parents, with a custome, which we generally hould with euery one, who desireth to enter as Religious, into this our Monastery. It is this. We do giue to euery such one, certaine Points of deuotion to meditate vpon; in which they vsually spend some few dayes. By this, when this short *Spirituall Exercise* (for so it is commonly called) is ended, both themselues and the Gouernours of their Soules, may be better assured of the certainty and firmeness of their vocation; and whether their vocation proceed from God, or from the Enemy (the Prince of darkenes) who sometimes transformes himselfe in shew, into an Angell of light. That labour then being once happily finished, with a *Generall Confession* of your whole life to this very tyme, we will presently send our letters with the former *Dispense* to your Parents.

Cosmophila.

O deare Father, this is more then eues I heard of, but I like it wonderfully well. This course pierceth euen to the hart of the Soule; and no doubt so good a groundworke cannot be attended on with any euill Euent: Therefore (*Good Father*) command me herein what you will, I am most ready to obey.

Confessarius.

Well then seeing (*Cosmophila*) you are yon and not experienced in this kind of *Exerci* Therefore that this worke shall not becom ouer fastidious and wearisome vnto you, will content my selfe with appointing yo to meditate on these foure points followin which are commonly called the *Quatuor N uissima*. Of which the holy Scripture th sayth: (z) *In all thy works remember* (Nouissim *thy later End, and thou shalt not sinne for euer.*

(z) Eccles. cap. 7.

1. *Death.*
2. *Iudgment.*
3. *Hell.*
4. *Heauen.*

The manner and forme of meditating these points, which I would wish you to to low, and which is particularly obserued b the Religious of this our Monastery, is s downe by the late Holy *Bishop of Geneua*, i his booke entitled, *An introduction to a deuo lyfe.* These former points are so fully and m uingly disposed in that booke, and for the be ter begetting in the Readers Soule a Contr tion and loathing of sinne, as that I will ta the paines, to write the *said Meditations dow* for you (omitting diuers others for your gre ter ease,) euen in the same words witho any alteration, as they are deliuered by the fo said Booke. For to alter them in any sort (an th

at perhaps to the worse) were by deprauing is booke, euen mightely to wrong the wor-y and pious Author. Therefore you may editate on them, as they shalbe in Order set owne; and you may bestow a whole day at seuerall chosen houers) to meditate only one of them; so as within the compasse of sse then one Weeke, you may performe the *editations* of them all. The *Lady Abbesse* will lot to you a retired roome, as more fitting r meditation, where you are to stay from the ompany of all others during the tyme of these our *Meditations*. And the will assigne one to tend vpon you for all necessaries belonging o your body; and herselfe at least once a day ill visit you, and further you with her direc-ions in this your spirituall labour, & to see, nd you proceed therein.

Cosmophila.

I am most ready to follow your prescribed mes, and indeede I am most willing, that out Reuerence, and my good *Lady Abbesse*, ould euen mould me anewe, as both of you all thinke best, presuming it will turne to honour of God, and benefit of my owne oule. Therefore I will now leaue you for the yme (*Good Father*) and attend *you Madame*, r your shewing me the place of my retire-ent.

Abbesse.

Abbesse.

Follow me then (*hopefull Cosmophila*) and will bring you to it. Come in, Loe this is your Chamber, where for some few dayes you are to stay alone, during the performance of your Meditations. You shall haue a sister to attend you with all necessaries, & my selfe will moreouer visit you euery day at diuers tymes for your greater encouragement in so pious and profitable spending of your howers. And with this for the present, I will leaue you; and send you instantly the forsaid transcribed Meditations, which our *Confessarius* hath wished you to peruse, and seriously to ponder.

Cosmophila.

Well, *Deare Lady*, I commend my selfe first to Almighty *God*, and to all the *Blessed Saints* in Heauen, and then to Your and Father *Confessarius* good prayers, that I may reape such spirituall benefit by the said ensuing Meditations, as may most comfort my Soule, and strengthen it in prosecuting, with all feruour and true fortitude, my intended Course of life.

The first Meditation, of Death.

The Preparation.

1. *Place your selfe reuerently, in the presence of God.*

2. Pray

2. *Pray him to inspire you with his grace.*

3. *Imagine your selfe to be extreamely sicke, lying vpon your death-bed, without any hope of recouery.*

Considerations.

1. Consider the vncertainty of the day of your *Death. O my poore soule, thou must owe of this body one day: but when shall that day be? Will it be in Winter, or in Summer? In City, or Country? By day, or by night? Shall it be vnawares, or with aduertisement? By sickneße, or by casualty? Shall thou haue leasure to confeße thee, or not? Shall thou haue the assistance of thy Ghostly Father, or not? Alas, O my Soule, of all theſe things we know not one; only certaine it is, that dye we muſt, and alwayes ſooner, then we imagine.*

2. Consider, that at that tyme, the whole world shall haue an end, so far forth as concerneth thy selfe, that is, there shall be no more worlds for thee; yea, it will turne vpside downe before thine Eyes: for then the pleasures, the vanities, the worldly ioyes, the fond affections of thy life will seeme vnto thee like flying shadowes, and fading cloudes. *Ah! wretched Captiue that I am; for what trifles and bubbles haue I offended almighty God?* Thou shalt then euidently see, that thou hast offended him for iuſt nothing. Contrary-wise, at that houre, all deuotion, piety, and other good-workes, will seeme vnto thee, the greateſt, and ſweeteſt Treaſures in the world. *O whether ſone did I not follow this faire and pleaſant path, will thou then ſay?* If that

that ſorrowfull tyme, thy ſinnes, which before ſeemed vnto thee but little Molehills, will appeare bigger then huge Mountaines; and thy deuotion ſo little, that thou wilt be ſcarce able to perceaue it.

3. Conſider, the long and languiſhing Fare-wells, and *Adieu's* that thy diſtreſſed ſoule will then giue to this world; how ſorrowfully ſhe will bid *adieu* to Riches, to Honours, to Vanities, to vaine Company, to Pleaſures, to Paſtimes, to Friends, to Neighbours, to Parents, to Kinſfolks, to Husband, to Wyfe, to Children, and in a word, to all creatures: And finally to her owne body, which ſhe muſt likewiſe leaue all pale, wrinckled, hideous, loathſome, and moſt deteſtably ſmelling.

4. Conſider the impreſſions, that one ſhall haue, to lift vp, or lay hand on this thy body. The great haſt, that euen thy beſt friends will make, to carry thy carcaſſe out of doores, and to hide the ſame full deepe vnder the ground, farre inough from their ſight: and this done, how ſeldome afterwards the world will thinke vpon thee? Surely no more then thou thy ſelfe haſt thought vpon other men who haue deceaſed before thee: *God haue mercy on his Soule* (will they ſay) and there is all. *O death how art thou to be pondered? How art thou terrible, pitiles, and without compaſſion?*

5. That at this departure from the body the Soule taketh his way on the right hand, or the left. Alas, alas, whither then ſhal thine go? what way ſhall it take? Surely no other then

that

at, which it hath heretofore begun in this world.

Affections, and Resolutions.

1. Pray earnestly to God, and cast thy lfe with trembling loue betwixt his armes, nd say: *Alas, O my Lord, receaue me into thy prote-ion at that dreadfull day. Make that last houre happy nd fauourable vnto me; and let rather all the rest of y life be nothing else, but dayes of sorrow, affliction, nd calamity.*

2. Despise the world, thus saying: *Seeing know not the houre, wherein I must leaue thee, O retched world. I will no more set my loue vpon thee. my deare Friends, Kinsfolkes, and Allies, suffer me beare you only that affection, which is compatible ith an holy amity, and may therefore last eternally. er why should I vnite my selfe to you, in such sort, as at afterwards we should be forced to break the knot amity betwixt vs?*

3. *I will therefore from this very instant, prepare y selfe for that perilous houre, and take that care ich is requisite to end this iourney happily. I will se-re the state of my conscience, to the vttermost of my ility, and take present order for the reformation, and endment of such, and such my defaults &c.*

Conclusion.

Giue thankes vnto God, for these Resolu-ons, which he hath infused and giuen vnto ee: and offer them againe, thankefully, lo-ngly, and lowly vnto his Maiesty. Intreat him

him a new, to giue thee a *Happy death*, for th
death of his dearely beloued Sonnes sake, ou
Lord and Sauiour. Implore the assistance o
the Blessed *Virgin Mary*, thy *Angell Gardian*, an
all the holy Saints in Heauen.

The second Meditation, of Iudgment

The Preparation.

1. *Place thy selfe in the presence of God.*
2. *Pray him to assist thee with his grace.*

Considerations.

1. After the time, that God hath ordai
ned for the continuance of the world; and af
ter a number of dreadfull signes, and horrible
presages; the terrour thereof shall make a man
wither, for feare and anguish. A consuming
floud of fire shall burne, and reduce to ashes
euery thing that is vpon the face of the earth
nothing (we see) excepted to be priuiledged
from this fyery deluge.

2. After this fearfull floud of flames and
lightnings, all men shall rise from their graues
(excepting such as already be risen) and at the
summoning of the Archangels voyce, they
shall appeare before the iudgment Throne, in
the valley of *Iosephat*. But alas, with what dif-
ference? For the one sort, shall arise with glo-
rified bodies, casting forth rayes of exceeding
light; and the other in bodies, or rather in Car-
kasses, most hideous and loathsome to behold

3. Consi

3. Consider the Maiesty, wherewith the Soueraigne Iudge will appeare, enuironed with all the armies of his Angells and Saints. Before him shall be borne triumphantly, his *Sacred Crosse*, shining much brighter then the sunne: A standart of Grace to the Good, and of rigour and terrour to the Wicked.

4. This Soueraigne Iudge, by his redoubled commandement, & which shall suddainly, and in a moment be put in execution, shall separate the good from the bad: placing the one at his right hand, and the other at his left. O euerlasting separation, after which these two bands, shall neuer more meete againe together!

5. This separation being made, and the bookes of Consciences being layed open, all men shall see clearely, the malice of the wicked, & the contempt which they haue borne to the *Maiesty of God*. And on the other side, the pennance of the good, and the effects of the grace of God, which they haue receaued, and nothing at all shall be hidden or kept secret in that great *Consistorie*. *O good God!* What a shamefull confusion will this be for the one, and what a glorious consolation for the other!

6. Consider the last sentence pronounced against the wicked: *Goe you* (*) *cursed into euerlasting fyre, prepared for the Diuel and his angels.* Waigh well these words, which are so waighty. *Goe*, sayth he: a word of eternall reiection and abandoning of those vnfortunate Weetches, banishing them eternally from his glorious face. Next, he termeth them, *accursed*: *O my*

(*) Math. 25.

Soule, how dreadfull a Curse? a Curse comprising in it all manner of mischiefe and misery; An irrevocable curse, comprehending all tymes, and eternity. He addeth, *into everlasting fire. Behold O my hart, the grievous horrour of this eternity: O eternall, eternity, and boundlesse infinity of paines, how dreadfull art thou!*

7. Consider the contrary Sentence, given and pronounced in favour of the good. *Come,* (*) *saith the Iudge;* (*O sweet word, & beginning of salvation, by which God draweth vs vp vnto himselfe, and receaueth vs into the bosome of the rest and glory*) *the Blessed of my Father,* (O deare blessing, treasure of blisse) *Possesse the kingdome, which is prepared for you, from the beginning of the world.* O good God, what excesse of favour! for this kingdome hath no end.

(*) Matth. vbi supra.

Affections, and Resolutions.

1. *Tremble, O my soule at the remembrance heereof. O my God who can secure me, at that dismall day, in which the pillars of heauen shall tremble for feare?*

2. Detest and abhorre thy sinnes, for only they can cast thee away, at that dreadfull houre.

3. *Ah wretched hart of mine, resolue to amend all. O Lord, I will iudge my selfe now, with all care & strictnes, least I be then iudged far more rigorously. I will examine and condemne my selfe, that the eternall Iudge condemne me not in the latter day. I will with all sorrow and humblenesse, frequent the Sacrament of Confession, and will accept all necessary penance, and aduises &c.*

Conclusion.

1. Thanke the Goodnes of God, that hath giuen the meanes, to prouide for that day, and time, and oportunity to do pennance.
2. Offer him thy hart to performe it.
3. Pray him to giue thee grace, well, and truly to accomplish it.

The third Meditation, of Hell.

The Preparation.

1. *Place thy selfe in the presence of God.*
2. *Pray him to assist thee with his grace.*
3. *Imagine to thy selfe a darke Citty, all on fyre with pitch and brimstome, and thronged with miserable Citizens, which cannot get out.*

Considerations.

1. Consider, that the damned are within this bottomlesse pit of *Hell*, as within this vnfortunate Citty, where they suffer vnspeakable torments in all their senses, & in all their members: Because, as they haue employed all their senses and members to commit sinne, so shall they suffer in all their senses and members, the paines and torments due vnto sinne. There the wanton eyes, and lasciuious lookes shall be afflicted with the horrible vision of Deuills, and hellish spectacles. The eares for delighting in vicious discourses, detractiõ, & slan-

ſlanders, ſhall heare nothing but lamentabl
out-cries, and deſperate howlings; and ſo o
others.

2. Conſider, that ouer, and aboue all the
bitter torments, there is yet another greate
then they all; Which is, the loſſe and *Priuati*
of the glory of God, rom whoſe amiable face, &
fruition, they are for euer irreuocably debar
red. Now if *Abſolom* found, *that the priuation of th*
face of his Father Dauid, was more grieuous vn
to him, then his very exile; O *mercifull Lord*
what an infinite griefe will it be, to be for euer depri
ued from beholding of thy moſt delightfull and louel
face!

3. Conſider withall, the *Eternity* of thes
paines, which only thing, maketh *Hell* intol
lerable. Alas, if a flea in our eare, or if the hea
of a little feauer, make one ſhort night ſo lon
and tedious, how tedious and terrible ſhall th
night of *Eternity* be, accompanied with ſo
many vnſpeakable torments? Of this *Eternit*
groweth, in the damned, an eternall deſpera
tion, infinite rage, and moſt abhominable
blaſphemyes, &c.

Affections, and Reſolutions.

1. Terrify thy ſoule, and ſtir thy ſelfe v
to feare, with the words of holy Iob: O m
ſoule, art thou able to liue for euer, with euerlastin
flames, and amidſt this deuouring fyre? Wilt thou
willingly forſake the ſight of thy God for euer?

2. Confeſſe, that thou haſt deſerued it
And wretch that I am, how often? O my deare Lord
from

from henceforth, I will take a new course, and tread a contrary way; for why should I descend into this bottomlesse pit of Hell? I will therefore do this, or that endeauour to auoide sinne, which only can beget this immortall death.

The fourth Meditation, of Heauen.

The Preparation.

1. *Place thy selfe in the presence of God.*
2. *Pray him, to assist thee with his grace.*

Considerations.

1. Consider a faire and cleare night, and thinke how pleasant a thing it is, to behould the skye, all spangled with an innumerable multitude, and variety of starres. Then againe, in thine imagination, ioyne all this nights goodly beauty, with the beauty of a layre sunne-shine day; such a one, that the brightnesse of the sunne beames, should not hinder the sight of the golden starrs, nor the siluer layes of the Moone: and after all this, say bouldly, that all this is nothing, in regard of the excellent beauty of that great *Paradise*. *O how this place is to be desired, and to be loued! O how pretious is this noble City!*

2. Consider the Nobility, Beauty, and multitude of the Inhabitants, and Citizens of this Blessed Countrey; those millions of millions of *Angells*, and *Archangells*, of *Cherubins* and *Seraphins*; those troupes of *Apostles*, *Prophets*, *Martyrs*,

tyrs, *Confessours*, *Virgins*, and *holy Matrons*. O how blessed is this blessed Company? The lowe and meanest whereof, is more beautifull t behould, then all this visible world: what sight will it then be, to see them altogether *But O my God, how happy are they? They sing cont nually, melodious songs of eternall loue; they alway enioy a constant and stedfast estate of gladneße; th enterchange one to another vnspeakable contentmen and liue in the comfort of endleße, and indissoluble mity.*

3. In a word, consider what good the all haue to enioy *God*, who gratifyeth ther for euer, with his amiable countenance; and b the same, powreth into their harts, an *abysse* delights. What a good is it, to be vnited euerla stingly to their beginning? They are there lik happy birdes, which flye chir ing, & singin perpetually in the *Heauen of thy Diuinity*; whic compasseth them on all sides, with vnspeaka ble pleasures. There euery one striueth wit an holy emulation, who may do best; an without any enuie, sing the prayses of the *Creatour. Blessed be thou, O sweet Lord, and sou reigne maker, who art so bauntifull vnto vs, and do communicate vnto vs so liberally, the euerlasting trea sures of thy glory!* And on the other-syde, G blesseth them all, with an eternall benedi ction. *Blessed be you for euer* (sayth he) *my bel loued creatures, who haue so faithfully serued me, an who shall praise me euerlastingly, with so great loue courage, and contentment.*

Affections, and Resolutions.

1. Admire, and euer praise this heauenly Countrey. *O how beautifull art thou, my deare Hierusalem?*

2. Reproach vnto thy hart, the little courage, which it hath had vnto this present, for hauing gone so much awrye, from the way of this glorious habitation. *O wherefore haue I so much estranged my selfe from my soueraigne Good! Ah! wretch that I am, for these pleasures, so displeasant and light, haue I a thousand, and a thousand tymes, left the eternall and infinite delights. Where was my wit and vnderstanding, to despise such goods so desirable, for desires so vaine and contemptible?*

3. Aspire notwithstanding, with vehement resolution, to this delicious and desired aboad. *O my gratious God since it hath pleased you, at the length to recall my wandering steps, and to direct them into the right way, neuer hereafter will I turne back to those by-wayes: neuer hereafter will I stray from the true path. Let vs goe with courage, my deare Soule, Let vs runne towards this blessed Countrey, which is promised vs, in the kingdome of Heauen: What make we so long in this beggerly country of Egypt? I will therefore dispatch my selfe from all such things, as may put me out of the way, or hinder me in so happy a iourney. I will performe such, and such things, as may bring me safely, and speedily to my iourneys end.*

Abbesse.

Reuerend Father *Confessarius*: The time is now ended of *Cosmophila* her recollection, and all her *Meditations* are now finished. Therefore I hould it conuenient farther, to leaue her solitary Chamber; and so we both may see, what fruite she hath reaped of this her allotted time. Indeed I am in great hope, that her *Meditations* haue wrought very forcibly vpon her iudgment: I my selfe will goe, and bring her forth.

Loe *Good Father*, I haue freed *Cosmophila* of her voluntary imprisonment, and haue brought her forth againe to your Reuerence. Now *Cosmophila*, you may freely heere, vnfould vnto Father *Confessarius*, whether you haue reaped any spirituall profit by this your willing restraint, and by medita ing of the points, which were appointed you.

Cosmophila.

O Good *Madame*, and you *Reuerend Father*, I should be most vngratefull, not only to your selues, but chiefly to his diuine Goodnes, if I should conceale the benefit, which (I trust) I haue gotten in this *Spirituall Exercise*: such and so abundant consolation hath pleased his diuine Maiesty to powre into my Soule, and indeed I here confesse with an inexplicable comfort, that whereas before my retyrement I was most willing to imbrace a *Religious life*; my desire thereof is now so infinitly increased, as that

that my words are scarce able to expresse my thirsty greedines thereof. And to lay my selfe openly to you both, besides the prefixed order of meditating the foresaid points set downe in writing, I after laboured to apply (according to my weaknes of iudgment) the vse of euery particular *Meditation*, to the seconding and furtherance of my intended course of a *Religious life*, I will exemplify this point in all the *Meditations*.

In my meditation of *Death*, I thus discoursed with my owne Soule: *If the tyme of our death be most uncertaine unto vs; If at that tyme there must be an end of all the world, so far forth as concerneth vs; If at that howre, all our tyme fruitlesly afore spent in the pleasures of the world, will seeme most displeasing to our Memory in regard what is to follow death; haue not I then iust reason, to spend my tyme hereafter in that most strict course of life, which will make me lesse vnwilling to entertayne death, whensoeuer it shall come, and will afford me greater confidence and hope of my future Saluation?*

The Meditation of *Iudgment* did most affraight my poore Soule; considering the dreadfull and terrible signes, which are to be the fore-runners of the day of iudgment. But especially considering the last Sentence pronounced by the Iudge to the wicked, and to the Good or vertuous: To the *wicked* in these wordes: *Goe you cursed into euerlasting fyre.* To the *Good* and vertuous: *Come you blessed of my Father, possesse the kingdome, which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* I then concluded with my selfe, *That no paynes or labour in this world*

could be thought by any man enioying but any spark of reason, to be ouermuch for the auoyding of the euerlasting fyre, or for the gayning of that promised kingdome.

3. In the meditation of Hell; I did consider two points with reference to my determined life. First, the insufferableneſſe of the paines of Hell; Secondly, that they were to continue for all Eternity. Alas, thought I, what is all the rigour and austerities in the most strict course of Religion that is in the world, in respect of the least part of those dreadfull torments? Againe, What is to leade a life somewhat paynefull to flesh and blood only for the space of some few yeares, in respect of suffering insupportable torments for all eternity, and without end? Then did I conclude in the secret of my Soule: Happy is that Man, or woman, who with a Christian Resolution and courage, is wholy bent to lead a most seuere and austere life, for the preuenting the grieuousnes of the paines of Hell, which are to continue for euer. And then were presented vnto my trembling Hart those words of the Holy Scripture: Who (a) can dwell with deuouring fyre, and with euerlasting ardours?

(a) Esay. 33.

4. To end with the Meditation of Heauen. O how was my Soule rauished with inexplicable comfort in pondering, that it is in our power and will, by suffering some laborious Acts in this world, and through the mercy of God, to purchase those most happy ioyes of Heauen! Then I said to my selfe: Shall the perseuerance of the three Vowes of a Religious life, the fasting, shall rising in the night to prayse God, or the any other Mortifications whatsoeuer practised in

masteries, be thought too great a price, for the buying of the most pretious Margarite (b) of the kingdome of Heauen, where all the Saints do now raigne with God, and shall raigne for euer, and euerlastingly? No: and hereupon came presently into my mind those words of the Apostle (sometymes repeated by my owne Father:) The sufferings (c) of this tyme are not worthy of the glory to come, that shall be shewed vnto vs. In this sort were my thoughts busied, after I had performed the Method prescribed in euery *Meditation*.

(b) M. tb. 13.

(c) Rom. 8.

Confessarius.

I much reioyce (*Happy Cosmophila*) at this your (more then expected) fortunate proceeding. Well then; Seeing things so prosperously goe on, there remayneth nothing, but that the *Lady Abbesse* now at the feast of *S. Iohn Baptist* (my *Patron*) which is within these few dayes, do admit you into the Nouiship, with your sister *Celia*. In the meane tyme both of you, may make your Letters ready, which you meane to send to your Parēts; & mine ioyned to thē by that time shall not be wanting. Your Retinue, which you brought with you, may stay here vntill the tyme aforesaid, when you shall publikely receaue the vsuall *Habit*, or cloathing of the *Nunnes* of this Monastery; at the performance whereof your said seruants may be present, that so they may with greater confidence assure your Parents of all things hereafalling out either cōcerning you, or your sister *Celia*. And seeing *Religious Women* in most

Mona-

Monasteries, do change their Names, at their first entrance into Religion, therefore since your owne desire (vpon your receauing of the Sacrament of *Confirmation*) aboue expressed is such hereafter instead of *Cosmophila*, signifying *A louer of the world*, you shall be called Sister *Christophila* as hauing deuoted your selfe wholy to the *Loue, and seruice of Christ*, our Redeemer and Sauiour.

Abbesse.

I condescend (*Cosmophila*) most willingly to all that, which *Reuer. Father Confessarius* hath disposed, touching your admittance; And at the day aboue named, I will giue you your *Habit*, and we will by Gods Grace account you hereafter, as one of our owne.

Cælia.

No more then *Cosmophila*, but sister *Christophila*. O happy houre! We are now *Sisters* in a double manner, Before by *Nature*, now by *Grace*; before by *Generation of Parents*, now by *Regeneration of God* himselfe; briefly, before by a certaine constraint and *Necessity*, proceeding from Man; now by our *Voluntary choyse* of one and the same Religious forme of life, rising from the blessed inspirations of his *Diuine Goodnes*. But (*Good sister*) seeing the tyme of your admittance will be within these so few dayes, let vs in the meane while haue ready a ioint letter, written from vs both, to our louing Parents,

vents, to acquaint them with all the passages concerning vs both.

Cosmophila.

I shall (*louing Sister*) be most willing to put my name and hand to all, what hath passed touching either of vs, since my first arriuall to this place: Therefore I could with you (as being the elder *Sister*) to indite and penne the letter. And *Reu. Father Confessarius* will (as he sayth) send with ours, both his owne letter to our Parents, and a Coppy of *the discourse* passed betweene him and me. Therefore let vs both goe presently about it; which being perfected, I will giue the letters and the discourse (the day after my Cloathing) to one of my Seruants, that he may present them from vs, to our most deare *Parents.*

A Letter written by the two sisters Celia, and Cosmophila, to Syr Orthodoxus Knight, and his Lady Gy recia, their deare Parents.

MOst *Deare and louing Parents*; who vnder God, haue beene the loue meanes, that we haue any being in this world, and that we breath this common Ayre: We your two most humble and Obedient Daughters, beseech you to read the Contents of this our mutuall Letter, with all serenity of mind, and freedome from griefe and passion, and that you would be pleased, that these flowing teares equally

shed

shed by vs both, at the writing hereof, may not become fruitles, and neglected in your Eyes. We then in all prostration of body and mind, hereby do make knowne to you, that your daughter *Celia* cannot be induced vpon any Motiue whatsoeuer to forsake her happy and blessed vocation; and (which perhaps will seeme far more strange in your apprehension) that her *Sister Cosmophila*, in place of withdrawing her sister *Celia* from her votary life, is fully determined to vndergoe with her the same Course, and heere to remaine without any thought of euer seeing her Country againe: Yea indeed she hath already taken vpon her the *Habit* of this our Monastery. The more certaine particulars of both our Resolutions, the letters sent at this present from our most *Reuerend Confessarius* will fully lay open to you; since the vnexpected change of *Cosmophila*, was wrought by the deuout and learned *Discourse*, which he did vse vnto her.

Now then *Most deare Parents*, we know you loue vs sincerly; let your loue descend chiefly to the loue of our Soules. True it is, you intend vs great aduancements; but what are our Soules bettered thereby? You are willing to procure for vs high Mariages; But what more noble Spouse, then *Christ*? You couet, that we may liue in all affluency and abundance of temporall commodities & pleasures: O how opposit and crosse is this way, to that chosen way of life, which *our Sauiour*, the Apostles, & other most eminent Saints haue before vs trodden? Briefly, you euen thirst to haue by vs

(as

(as being your next heyres, now after the death of our Brother *Monadelphus*) the descent of your house and family (which we know, for some hundred yeares hath allready continued) to be produced, extended, and drawne out hereafter, from tyme to tyme. But is there any tyme so long, as *Eternity*, to the which we both being your Children, and the branches of your bodies, by imbracing this our so much wished and desired life, do hope to aspire? Let not then, (O let not) temporall worldlings be preferred in your iudgment, before our *Saviour*; Let not the prosperous lyfe of sensuall men ouerballāce with you the most austere & severe life of *Christ* himselfe, of his *Apostles*, and of all other most glorious Saints now raigneing in Heauen. Finally, let not the desire of the continuance of your descent and House only for certaine yeares here vpon the earth (and that most vncertaine) endanger to prevent the eternall continuance of your Children, and Issue in Heauen.

No, No. It is vanity, to set our Loue vpon those things, which speedily passe away, and to neglect that, which (as the chiefe meanes) conduceth to our Celestiall ioy, which is euer permanent. We know, you are Rich in the world; Our chiefest Ambition is, to be Rich in *Christ*, who was so poore, as that he had no place, in which to rest himselfe, for do we not read: (i) *The foxes haue holes, the birds of the ayre haue nests, but the Sonne of man hath no where to rest his head?* Giue vs both therefore your absolute and most voluntary consents (euen for his

(i) *Luc.* 9.

sake,

sake, Who was *so poore*, and who suffered death for the saluing of all mens Soules) that we may imitate in part his *Pouerty*, and answere to his heauenly inspirations bestowed vpon vs, for the saluing of our Soules.

And although we be not Schollers, yet we haue read in deuout spirituall Bookes that much in our defence (this we speake not by way of contestation with you, noe, *God* forbid, but only by most humbly exhibiting what may be said in our behalfe) that, *what thing soeuer houlds one from following the inspirations and Motions of God, must of necessity be a Temptation*. But euery *Temptation* (you know) proceedeth from the Enemy of man. We might (as pertinent to vs) here also alledg the aduice, which (a) *S. Ierome* giueth to *Furia*, a noble matrone (who entred into Religion) in these words: (2) *Thy Father willbe sory* (meaning for taking a Religious Course,) *but Christ will be glad; thy friends will lament, but the Angells will giue thee ioy: Let thy Father do what he will with his temporall state. Thou art not so much his, whose thou art by generation, as his, whose thou art by regeneration; His meane, who redeemed thee at a deare price, with his owne bloud.* Thus this Blessed *Father* meditated of this point. And may not (vnder both your corrections) these words be in some sort applied to our Cause?

(a) Ieroms. Epist.

What answere to this our Letter, you will returne, we know not; yet certainly no answere but one (worthy your selues, worthy Christian Parents) you can returne, which is able to ease our troubled minds. That is, [illegible]

ur mother Gynecia do with all ioy entertayne both ur happy Resolutions; Therefore we both giue you r full and free consents, to proceed, as you haue be- n; Since your Soules are your owne, not ours; and u, not we, must answere for them. We both therefore, with all cheerefullnes of mind, Fiat voluntas ei; *and most loath and vnwilling shall either of vs, reafter be to resist Gods blessed Ordination herein.* how would this answere relieue and che- h vs, dispelling from our afflicted harts all auines of mind, no small hinderance to a rtuous Life!

And thus in the good Hope of this our so uch desired Answere, we euen vpon our nees do begge both your blessings, and will euer cease to power out our poore prayers to s *Diuine Maiesty*, to preserue you both in his atch and custody; that so after your peregri- ation in this world is once ended, we all may eet together in the *Heauenly Ierusalem*, and ay mutually and daily enioy that most bles- d sight of him, who is our *Creatour*, our *Fa- er*, and our *Redeemer*.

Tours truly most dutifull, and Obedient Daughters, Cælia, Cosmophila.

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nother letter of the Confessarius, written to the worthy Knight Syr Orthodoxus, *& to the Lady Gynecia his wife, at their house in London.*

VV *Orthy Syr*. Notwithstanding all want of knowing one another,

much leſſe of any former ſtreight entercourſe
betweeene your Worſhippe and my ſelfe: yet
I hould it expedient to ſalute you & the *wor-*
thy Lady (your Bedfellow) with theſe my let-
ters: With the Subiect wherof, vpon your
opening of them, you will be fully acquain-
ted. They conceerne (as you may perceaue) the
preſent ſtate of your two daughters *Celia*, and
Coſmophila, Gentlewomen of ſuch deſert, as tha
you haue reaſon greatly to reioyce in a ſpiri-
tuall conſolation, that you are become Pa-
rents to two ſuch Children.

The elder of them (to wit *Celia*) came out
the laſt yeare (as you know) to become *Reli-*
gious, & this with both your conſents (though
not at the firſt, yet at the laſt obtained.) Your
ſecond daughter (I meane *Coſmophila*) was la-
tely ſent by you, vpon the death of *Monadel-*
phus your only Sonne and Heyre, to perſuade
her *Siſter* (not being as yet profeſſed) to leaue
her vocation, and to returne back with her in
to England, for their mutually enioying o
your fayre & worthy Eſtate after your death
And hereby you may take notice, how *God*
hath far, contrary to your expectation, diſpo-
ſed in theſe matters.

Your daughter *Celia* ſtands immoueable
(indeed inexorable, to all the perſuaſions
which her *Siſter* to the contrary, could make
to her) in her reſolution to proceed in her al-
ready begun ſtate. And *Coſmophila* her ſelfe
at the length determined (through my ſpee-
ches, and reaſons to her alleadged, as a poore
and ſubordinate Inſtrument vnder God her
in

in) to imbrace the same Spirituall Course with her *Sister*, and rests firmely resolued (as you may further vnderstand by their owne letters) here to remayne with vs. For she alreadv is entred into the Company of the *Religious Sisters*, and hath begun to make her *Nouiship*. Who can deny, but that in this busines there is *Digitus Dei*, Gods Good prouidence, & preordination ?

Now, Worthy Syr, whereas your selfe and your vertuous *Lady* are Catholikes, professing one and the same Religion with me, I hold it her rather my duty to giue you both what satisfaction I am able, for the alleuiating and lessining of both your griefes, which perhaps you may conceaue by this strange alteration in your yonger daughter, and perseuerance in the Elder. And for the better facilitating of this point (with the consent of both your *Daughters*) I haue sent with these letters, *A Coppy of the whole discourse*, which passed betweene *Cosmophila*, and my selfe. By perusing whereof, you may conceaue; First, the weakenes of those Obiections, made by you against *Religious life*, so much for the tyme insisted vpon by you. daughter *Cosmophila*. Secondly, you may here see the seuerall arguments and vnanswearable Reasons, fully warranting the election and choyce of that state of life, which both your daughters haue made. And these said Reasons are taken from the *Worth, Dignity, Honour, and benefits of a Religious and votary life.*

And notwithstanding my sending to you the former wholediscourse; yet considering

how strongly and violently (and this perhaps with some offence to God.) You, and your *Lady* may entertaine at the first these vnexpected occurrences; therefore intending to transgresse the bonds of a letter, I haue thought it conuenient, for both your Spirituall good, and also for the good of other parents, to whom this my discourse may perhaps hereafter be made knowne (if so themselues haue any Children desirous to take a Religious Course) to enlarge my selfe in these leaues following, by discouering and expressing how dangerous a thing it is in Catholike parents, and how domageable both to their owne Soules, and to the Soules of such their Children, (who would gladly imbrace a *Religious life*) to hinder, resist, and withstand them in this their pious Resolution.

Touching then this *Subiect*, I will deuide my whole future discourse into three generall branches, or Heads. First, I will shew the grieuousnes of the sinne, in Parents, diswading their Children from the Election of so blessed a Course. Secondly, I will alledg diuers examples of Gods iust, and seuere punishments inflicted vpon parents, and other such persons, who haue labored to withdraw and alter the mindes of those, who haue made choyce of this Monasticall and retired Course. In the third, and last place, I will proue by force of Reason, that parents ought to be cõtent, quietly to resigne their Wills, to Gods Will herein; I meane in ioyfully suffering their Children to be called by God, to this his so peculiar seruice.

To

To begin with the first: And first, it is euident, that such Parents do fight & warre euen against Gods owne will and predetermination: a warre most impious, and withall most exitious, and fatall to them that vndertake it. For can it be denied, but that to scatter abroad that, which God hath gathered together; to diswade those Souldiers, which his diuine Maiesty hath mustered to serue vnder his owne standard; to destroy what *God* hath built; Finally to oppose and withstand the Counsell of *God*, is a most heinous sinne, and a great Sacriledge committed against him, who is Lord both of Heauen, and earth? And yet all those *Parents* and others, who seeke to dehort their *Children*, or their friends from a *Religious life* (if so they were resolued to vndergoe that holy Course) are interessed in all the former rehearsed Transgressions.

Let vs produce the iudgments of some ancient Fathers, touching the atrocity of the *Parents* sinne herein. We will begin with *S.* (a) *Chrysostome*, who reckoning vp diuers degrees of malice, which are found in any sinne, wherein *Charity* is chiefly wanting, concludeth; *That the greatest want of Charity is, voluntarily to oppose against a Mans Saluation.* And thus in this Fathers iudgment, *Parents* (through a preposterous loue borne towards their Children, in diswading them from a strict seruice of God) do become their Paricides; and do commit so much the more cruell and inhumane murther of their Children, by how much the life of the Soule is better, and more deare then the life of the Body.

(a) *Chrysost. l. 3. cont. vi. tuperat. vitæ Monasticæ.*

(b) Anselm Ep. ad Godefr.

S. Anselme (that holy Father, and Bishop of Canterbury) thus discourseth of the heinousnesse of this sinne in these words: If he, (b) that separateth the precious from the base, that is, a Soule from the World, be as the mouth of God; He then, who mouth and hand draweth a Soule, that adhereth to God to the world, what shall he be? Shall not that fall vpon him, which our Lord sayth: (c) He that gathereth not with me, scattereth; and He, that is not with me, is against me? Thus S. Anselme.

(c) Luc. 11.

I will descend herein to the iudgment of S. Bernard, who thus tragically amplifieth himselfe vpon this subiect: (d) O hard-harted Father, O cruell Mother, O barbarous, and impious Parents; yea not parents, but peremptory man-killers whose sorrowes are the safty of their Children, whose comforts their destruction; who had rather their Children should perish with them, then raigne without them. O strange abuse, &c. If Parents care not for their owne Saluation, what auayleth it them to persecute their Children? What comfort can be that burneth, afford them that burne? Or what comfort is it to the damned, to haue fellowes of their damnation? Thus much (worthy Syr) for a taste of the former three holy Fathers, touching the greatnesse of impiety committed by Parents, in seeking to withdraw their Children from the most blessed Course of a Religious and votary life.

(d) Bernard. Ep. 111.

In this next passage, I will descend to some few examples (omitting many others, for greater expedition) wherein God hath shewed his reuengfull hand against those, who haue impugned a Religious life. S. Ierome (e) recounteth, that one Praetextata, a noble Matrone, by

(e) Ierom. in his Ep to Laeta.

com-

commandement of her husband, who was vnle to the Virgin *Eustochium* who had deuoted herselfe to a *Religious life*, did change the said Virgins apparell for brauer cloaths, and curiously did combe her hayre after the fashion of the world; and all this to withdraw *Eustochium* from a *Religious lyfe*. But *Behould* (sayth *S. Ierome*) *the same night after* Prætextata *had done this, she sees in her sheepe an Angell that came to her, breathing with a terrible voyce to punish her in these words: Wert thou so bould as to prefer the Commandement of thy husband, before Christ? How durst thou handle the head of the Virgin of God, with thy Sacrilegious hands? Which hands shall euen now wither away, that thou thus tormented maist feele, what thou hast done; and at the end of the fifth moneth thou shalt be carried to Hell.* Thus *S. Ierome*; and he relateth for certaine, that her hãds were presently then withered and dryed, and that at the end of the tyme prefixed, she died.

S. Ambrose recordeth of a Noble *Yong Gentlewoman* (who was then liuing, when he wrote the relation) how that flying to the *Altar*, out of a great desire she had to be *Religious*; diuers of her nearest friends were much against this her pious determination, and one of them in a harsh and vnciuill manner thus rebuked her; (f) *Yf thy Father were now liuing, dost thou thinke he would suffer thee to liue vnmaried.* To whome the chast Virgin thus mildly answered: *Perhaps my Father therefore dyed, that he might not binder me.* The end hereof was, that this vnkind friend of hers dyed within a short tyme, after he had thus reprehended the Virgin; the

(f) *Lib. de Virginib.*

rest of her friends ascribing the cause of h
vnexpected death to his rough words giue
to her. And thereupon all they, who befo
were ready to diswade her from entring in
Religion, did after most willingly giue their a
sents thereto.

I will conclude this point of Example
wherein *Gods* reuenge hath beene manifest
in punishing of those, who labour to impug
and resist his Ordination of such, as desired
forsake the world, with the Example of o
called *Pontianus*, who was but a Bondslaue
a cruell and barbarous Mayster. This m
through desire of liuing a Saintly life, fled v
to a Monastery. But his Maister demand
him with great importunity, tooke him fro
thence. But what was his punishment the
fore? He was instantly strooken stone blin
and so by loosing his sight, he fully acknow
ledged his former sinne, and was most wil
ling that *Pontianus* his slaue should returne vn
to the Monastery. Yet notwithstanding
consent thereto, his Maister recouered no
sight, till *Pontianus* had touched his eyes wi
his hands, that so it might more euidently ap
peare, that his former transgression and fau
was the cause of his blindnes. This History
related by *S. Gregory* (g) *of Tours*, a Venerabl
and Worthy Authour.

(g) *Gregor. Turo. in vite Pontiani. c. 5.*

To come to the third, and last point of th
Subiect before mentioned, that is, to warran
with force of Reason, that *Parents* ought to re
content, and satisfyed with their Children fo
their entring into a *Religious life*. I thus affirme

that

that when *Parents* do freely offer vp some of their Children to the peculiar seruice of God, they depart with nothing therein, which is truly and soly their owne, but only willingly restore to *God*, what was *Gods* before. And thus *God* by demaunding them, challengeth but what is his right, and his owne; and therefore that *Parent*, who shall retaine and keepe back any of his children from *God*, committeth a horrible Sacriledge against his *Diuine Maiesty*; since it is *God*, not the *Parent*, (who was but a secondary instrument vnder him, & this only for the body) who gaue the first fabricke and making to the child; and who alone, without any concurrency of the *Parents* herein, infuseth the soule into the new begotten Body.

Thus far (*Worthy Syr*) I haue thought good to proceed for the better animating and encouraging of you, to rest content, or rather greatly to reioyce at *Gods* good pleasure in taking your two *Daughters* to his peculiar seruice, and patronage. But now good *Lady Gynecia*, since you are a *Woman*, I will produce (for your greater corroboration herein) two Examples of *Women*, shewing most admirable and spirituall fortitude in the losse and death of their Children; Much more then, ought you to entertayne with all cauennes and quietnes of mind, the absence of your two *Daughters*, entring into a *Religious Course*.

The first shall be that Noble *Woman*, who was the mother of the most valiant *Machabees*; who saw not one, or two only, but seauen of

her Sonnes put to most barbarous death euer in her owne presence, because they would not violate, and breake the Law giuen to them from *God*; and yet she was so far from being disanimated or grieued herewith, as that (as the *Scripture* relateth) *the* (h) *exhorted stoutly euery one of her sonnes, to be constant in his Religion in her owne Country language, filled with wisdome, & instilling manly Courage, to her womanish thoughts.*

(h) 2. Machab. 7.

And here *Madame*, you are to take notize that this happened in the tyme of the *Old Law*, which tyme serued but as a *Type*, or Figure of the tyme of the *Gospell*; (which, with reference to the tyme of the *Old Testament*, is (as the (i) *Apostle* sayth) *established in better promisses*. Yt shew a *Woman* in that imperfect tyme, had such spirituall Fortitude, as to reioyce at her Children's death, suffered for the (Honour of) God, and to encourage them to perseuer to the end in enduring their torments; shall not a Christian & *Catholike* Lady (such as you are) now in the tyme of the *Gospell* (which affoardeth far greater measure of Grace) fully be resolued with all resignation of Will and Iudgment, to forbeare the corporall presence only of her daughters, deuoting themselues to the more peculiar seruice of their *Lord* and *Redeemer*?

(i) Hebr. 8.

The secon I example, which I will present to your *Ladiship*, is of one *Melania*, a most noble Matrone of Rome; of whom *S. Ierome* thus writeth: (k) *Sancta Melania nostri temporis &c. Saint Melania, being the true Honour and Nobility among Christians of our tyme, when the dead body of her husband was scarse cold, and not buried, did loose to-*

(k) Ierome in Epitaph. Blessillæ.

eather two Sonnes. I am to relate (*sayth S. Ierome*) *an incredible thing, but I call Christ to witnesse a thing most true. Who would not thinke, that this afflicted Lady would not after a franticke manner, haue for griefe, torne her haire, cut asunder her apparrell, and haue strucken her breast with grieuous knocks and stroakes? Not one teare did she sheed; she stood immoueable, and prostrating herselfe at the feete of Christ, as though she would take hould of him, she smyled, saying; O sweet Lord, I shall hereafter serue thee with greater promptitude and readines, since thou hast freed me from so great a burden.* Thus *S. Ierome*, of this blessed *Woman*.

And now good *Madame*, (since for your comfort and satisfaction chiefly, I haue produced these two examples of *Women*) I here demand of you, whether you be persuaded, that either of these two Matrones, would haue grieued at *Gods* calling of their children into the state of *Religion*, who with wōderfull fortitude and magnanimity did endure euen the deaths of them? I know you be not. Why then will your selfe repyne, and grudge at *Gods* most mercifull proceeding, in causing your two daughters (*Calia*, and *Cosmophila*) to forsake this wicked world, and to oblige themselues (by solemne Vow) to a Religious seruing of his *Diuine Maiesty*?

Well, to proceed a litle further (*Worthy Knight* :) You may thinke, what a spirituall Treasure you haue of your two daughters; Since when your selfe is entangled and imbroyled in the thoughts of temporall busines (which euer is attended on with great anxie-

ty

ry and diſtraction of mind, and with no ſmal
hurt to deuotion) your two daughters (like
two humble Suppliants) not only in the da
tyme, but euen in the middeſt of the ſilen
night (when your ſelfe doth take your ſwee
repoſe and reſt) ſhall euen beſiege the eares o
God with their forcible and irreſiſtable praiers
that he would vouchſafe to direct all you
Actions, to the honour of himſelfe, & to you
owne Soules eternall Saluation. O moſt inex
plicable priuiledg, and highly to be prized b
all vertuous Catholike *Parents*?

I will vrge one ſhort Reaſon more, and ſo
end. If we believe, that ſo great a number o
Chriſtians (euen of thoſe who profeſſe a right
faythe) do perish eternally, according to that
ſaying of our Lord and Saviour; *Many be cal-*
led, but few be chosen: Why then ſhould a *Paren*
be vnwilling, and withdrawing back his con-
ſent, that his Children ſhould enter into that
ſtate of life, wherin conſiſteth the greateſt hope
and ſecurity of Saluation? And the rather, ſince
the mayne reaſon, why ſo few are choſen, and
ſo many damned, is becauſe by their liuing in
the world, and neglecting their Soules eter-
nall Good, they become thrall to the vanities,
vnlawfull pleaſures, ſinnes, and deceits ther-
of? Is not then that *Parent* moſt vnkind, (or
rather vnnaturall) that whereas there are two
waies ſet downe in Scripture, *the one the ſtrait*
way, leading the (m) *Soule to life*; the other *the*
broad way (heere in this world) *bringing to* (n)
deſtruction, and to the vnſupportable torments
of Hell-fyre, ſhould neuertheleſſe perſuade his

(l) *Matth.* 20.

(m) *Matth.* 7. *Luc.* 13.

(n) 2. *Pet.* 3.

Chil-

Children (being the issue of his owne body, & deriuing their bloud from his bloud) to liue & spend their dayes in this *Broad dangerous way*, wholy dissuading and discouncelling them (yea and this sometimes with threats, and vnkind vsage) from entring into the *Narrow way*? God grant, that many Parents in *England* be not interessed in this atrocity of sinne!

And so *Noble Syr*, seing this my letter to you growes long (I hope, through your fauorable acceptance thereof, not tedious) I will therefore conclude it with the words of *S. Basill*, (a most ancient and learned Father) who giueth his wholesome and Christian Counsell, touching this subiect in generall, in these words: (o) *Seeing so great rewards are offered them that follow the warfare of Christ, let Fathers willingly permit their sonnes, and Mothers their Daughters to come to him, and bring their Children with comfort and cheerefulnes vnto him: And let them reioyce at the hope of immortall Goods, whereof they shall be partakers together with their Children; and endeauour to haue them their Patrones in the sight of God. Let vs take care (I beseech you) lest we shew our selues to be too straight-harted in this vnseasonable loue of our Children; and let not the labours affright vs, to which they seeme to goe; but rather reioyce, that they shall meete with so great Glory. Let vs offer to God that, which we haue receaued of him, that we may also haue part of the glory and commendation of our Children, offering our selues together with them.* Thus far this learned Doctour. Whose words (as I said) shall giue a full close to this my Letter, presuming that you both, will take this my labour

(o) *Basil præfat. in Ascen.*

chari-

charitably, since it really proceeds from Charity; and so shall I euer rest at your command, in all Christian and spirituall seruice.

N. N. Confessarius of the English Nunne in Belgiopolis.

Syr Orthodoxus *his Answere, to the forsaid Letter of the Confessarius.*

VEry Reuerend Syr: It is now two Monethes, since I receaued yours, and my two *Daughters* Letters, as also your pious and learned *Discourse*, which you vsed toward my daughter *Cosmophila*. I was loath to returne any answere to you, or them presently, or vpon the suddaine, because such my answere might perhaps be presumed to proceed from griefe, passion, and a violent entertayning (at the first sight) the Occurrences specifyed in those Letters.

Now therefore *Your Reuerence* may take notice hereby, that I haue not only read, but euen studied your whole *Discourse*, with your letters sent vnto me; as also you may be aduertized hereby, that vpon my more retired, and dispassionate thoughts, I and my wyfe do greatly acknowledg our former errour, in shewing any reluctation, or drawing backe of our daughter *Celia*, from her already vndertaken life; or of our daughter *Cosmophila* from her entring into the said Course. Your Arguments set downe in your writings (I grant) conuince me: Your authorities drawne from the

he words of the ancient Fathers (whose iudgnent all humble Christians ought to obey) do uersway me; Briefly, the force both of your vritings, and of my daughters letters, haue ow at the last wrought such a Soueraignty, r Influence ouer both me and my wyfe, as hat we giue euen infinit thanks to *the Almigh-*, for distilling into them those holy Inspiations, which at this instant so strongly preayle in their Soules.

And to lay open my selfe more plainly vno you, I confesse, that since my first receauing f your letters, I haue perused some Authors reating of this particular subiect, controuered in your Discourse and letters; and I acknowledg, they wholy make against my tormer opinion therein. Therefore let both my leare *Daughters* rest satisfyed hereby, that I had ather dye, then seeke to peruert, or alter their ow setled determinations. No: *God* hath hosen them both to himselfe, and hath chosen but what afore was his owne: And shall a arnall Father, or Mother dislike, or repine at uch a choyce? O *God* forbid! And truly besides the force of your Authorities in behalfe of *Religious life* (which, I grant, are strong with me) I haue (as aboue I touched) lately perused diuers others mayne Motiues, conducing o the proofe of the said point, before by me impugned.

And first I find, that though *Parents* haue a certaine kind of authority ouer their Children, yet this authority is but delegated, or by deputation from *God*; as being but part of that autho-

authority, which *God* originally hath in him-
selfe ouer the said Children. Now I mu
needs say, that therefore if *God* command on
thing, and the *Parents* the contrary; the Chil
is obliged to obey *God*, rather then his *Pa*
rents. That this is most true, I grant is proued
in that *God* himselfe is he, from whom all *Pa*
ternity (as the (p) *Apostle* sayth) *is deriued*.

(p) *Ephes.* 3.

I will insist in one only reason more, whic
is in part touched in your large *Discourse*, an
indeed very much commandeth me. It is this
That, which we receaue from our *Parents* i
very small, in respect of that, which we re
ceaue from *God*; The euidency of which As
sertion is thus made cleare: Whereas *Man* i
compounded of Soule and body; The *Soule* i
much more pretious then the *Body*: Now th
Parents haue no hand in creating the *Soul*
since it is only *God*, who createth and infuseth
it. Therefore it is vsually taken, as a *Princip*
with the learned; *That God by creating the Soule*
doth infuse it into the body, and by infusing it doth
create it.

And as touching the making of the Body
Man only affordeth a litle seminall matte
thereto; but how this seminall matter ought t
be framed with all its parts and lineament
the *Parents* know not, that being the worke o
God, ordained in the first creation, or makin
of *Man*. Since then what we receaue from ou
Parents, touching the being either of the *Sou*
or the *Body*, is infinitly inferiour to that, whic
therein we receaue from God: how dishonou
rable then, were it to his *Diuine Maiesty*, for th

Paren

rent to expect his Child in any commande-
ment to obey him, and therby to disobey *God*?
So far you see by my speaches (*Reuerend Syr*) is
my iudgment altered herein, from what be-
fore it was. Therefore my desire is, that though
my selfe be changed in iudgment, yet let not
my *Daughters* change theirs. O no! Let them in
Gods holy Name goe forward with all spiri-
tuall alacrity and consolation, in their alrea-
dy choscn Vocation.

But now to reflect vpon my owne state: I
do vnspeakably repent me of my former Er-
rour (*God* grant not sinne) in laboring to with
draw my daughter *Celia* from her Monasticall
life. His *Diuine Goodnes* interpose his mercy
betweene me, & that vnlawfull Act of mine;
and let my teares already shed in that behalfe
receauing their force and vertue from the
teares of our *Redeemer*, spent for the saluation
of vs all) abstergc and wype away this my for-
mer fault.

And in very indeed I do apprehend my of-
fence therein to be far the greater, from this en-
suing Consideration: We obserue daily, that a
man, who laboreth to learne any Mechanicall
Art, or Trade, much more to get knowledg in
any of the seauen Liberall Sciences, will not
content himselfe with a competency, or me-
diocrity of learning in his *Mystery*, but will en-
deauour to arriue to all perfection therein. Yt
when a Christians designed *Art*, or *Mystery* (as I
may terme it) be to know, how to serue his
Creator and *Redeemer*, in the highest degree of
Vertue and Piety; How great hath my for-

mer ouersight beene (so mildly to terme it) in seeking to persuade my eldest Daughter to rest contented, in leading an ordinary, and common life of other Lay-Catholikes: and by endeauoring to withdraw her fro aspiring to any higher degree of vertue, both by my former letters, and by sending my Daughter *Cosmopbile* ouer, to recall her into England? Here I fully acknowledg my former weakenes of Iudgment.

But now (*Good Syr*,) I will more fully, euen powre out the secrets of my Soule vnto you. I freely grant, your *Discourse* to haue had such working force vpon myne, & my wyues vnderstanding, as that we both acknowledg *Gods* most mercifull Goodnes in the disposall of our two Daughters. Yea we further proceed, and wish you to take notice herby, that for expiating, and redeeming of our former offence, touching our said Daughter, and of all our other sinnes during our whole life, we both are resolued for the tyme hereafter, not to liue together as man and wyfe, but to separate our selues, and both to lead a Monastical and votary life; I, in some Citty of *Belgiopolis*, & in some *Conuent* there of the *Capuchins* (men most Blessed and Religious) of whom many (as I am informed) haue heretofore liued markably in the world; My wyfe in your owne Monastery of *Nunnes* (if so she can procure the *Lady Abbesse*, and your Consent thereto:) And thus my wyfe for her spirituall good, is most willing to become herselfe *an humble Seruer, euen to her owne Daughters.*

For Alas, Syr! What in true iudgment ſhould detayne vs from taking this Courſe? With three Children *God* hath bleſſed vs; One Sonne, and two Daughters, and they all dead (as I may ſay) in our owne life tyme. Our only Sonne, whome I hoped would haue been the Arch, as it were, & ſtay of my Houſe, dyed naturally; Our two daughters are alſo dead vnto the world. Therefore I ſee hereby (my wife being paſt Childbirth) that it is *Gods* good pleaſure, that not any of my owne body ſhall inherit my temporall ſtate: His bleſſed will be done.

And ſince *God* is the ſole true Lord of the earth, and of all things therein, I willingly & freely ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*: *Domini* (q) *eſt terra & plenitudo eius*: *The earth is our Lords, and the fulneſs thereof, the round world, and all that dwell therein.* Therefore I moſt humbly ſubmit my ſelfe to his only pleaſure herein. And let them inherit my temporall meanes, whome it ſhall beſt pleaſe his *Diuine Maieſty* to appoint. Though I could wiſh (and accordingly, I intend to diſpoſe, if ſo it may ſtand with his Gratious Goodnes) that the halfe of my Lands be giuen to him, who is neareſt to me in kindred of my *Owne Name* (ſuch a ſtrong tye haue humane and naturall reſpects in vs) and the other halfe of my ſtate be to be *ſould*, and diſtributed to ſpirituall vſes, for the good of myne owne, my wyues, & my two *Daughters* Soules.

(q) *Pſal.* 23.

This is all, that I can ſay, only (as aboue I haue fully deliuered my ſelfe) you may certify my two *Daughters*, how ioyfully I conceaue

of both their Choyces, & withall to let them know, that I at this present do forbeare particularly to answere their letters, in that this to you (Syr) doth sufficiently satisfy the contents of theirs; as also, because both I, and their Mother (*God* seconding our resolutions) hope to enioy their sight and presence, within these few weeks. Thus in the meane time, much acknowledging your former pious care towards them, I end, euer remayning,

Reuerend Syr,

Yours in all respectfull Obseruancy,
Orthodoxus.

The Conclusion, to the Reuerend Superiours, & deuout Sisters of all the English Monasteries of Religious Women beyond the Seas.

REuerend *Superiours*, and you *Vertuous Sisters*, my pen here makes bould (in place of a *Conclusion* to the former *Treatise*) to salute you all. What I haue aboue deliuered in the *Dialogue*, proceedeth from the great respect, I beare to your blessed Course of life; and therefore I did hould my selfe partly euen obliged in Conscience, to promote and aduance by my writings (what I could) the Worth and Dignity of your euen Heauenly State here vpon earth; and to encourage such others, who are carefull of their Soules Good, and whole state of life is compatible with a Religious Order,

to impath themselues in that most secure path and way.

O what pitty is it, to see many yong Gentlewomen so to sleight, and finally regard their owne happines? And therefore *God* hath bestowed vpon you greater measure of his grace, who breaking through all the worldly entanglements, wherewith others remayning shackled, haue actually begun to tread the most safe path to Heauen. If a man could by certaine labours acquire, and procure to himselfe a *Thousand pounds*, would he rest satisfyed by seeking after a *Hundred only*? Or what woman would be content to become a *Mayde of honour* to any Princesse, might she become a Princesse her selfe? And yet no lesse is the ouersight of such yong Gentlewomen, who may purchase to themselues, not transitory Goods, but an eternall Kingdome, and yet will not: And may without attendance to any temporall Princesse (how great soeuer) arriue to be *Queenes* themselues (for all women, that shall gaine Heauen, shall be *Queenes* in Heauen) and yet do greatly shew their neglect thereof.

Thrice *happy* therefore are you, most Vertuous, *and Religious Sisters*, who haue ouercome your naturall desires of temporall pleasures & dignities, and raised your thoughts and endeauours to the gayning of that most blessed Kingdome, which shall endure for all eternity! *Happy* (I say) you are, since by your Religious life you flye from the world, and from all the dangers thereof: So fully haue you vested in your selues, that Sentece of the Royall

Psa'm. 54. Prophet: *Who will giue me the wings like a Doue, and I will flye, and take my rest?* So you by withdrawing your selues from the world, are retired to a place, and state of security.

Ambros. de fuga sæcul. c. 4. Of this flight *S. Ambrose* thus writeth: *Let vs not be ashamed to flye; for it is a glorious flight, to flye from the face of sinne.* And indeed this holy Father speaketh with good reason: For, *here to flye, is to ouercome*: And this not only because we keep our selues safe and secure, in bearing a foote off, and far distant from the Enemy; but also by reason we giue the Enemy cause of discomfiture, euen by our flight, we being by this meanes far lesse subiect to those his spirituall Stratagemes, wherewith he ouerthroweth so many Soules, liuing in the world. Therefore I may conclude, that since a *Religious State* is most high in perfection, and aboue the Earth and all Earthly things; it may be truly termed a *Mountayne*, whereunto the calamities and miseries of this world cannot ascend, or arriue. What inexplicable consolation & ioy then, doe you all liue in, who are securely seated vpon this high *Mountayne*?

But now, my pen must take leaue of you (during the space of some lynes in this *Conclusion*) to turne it selfe (by way of a warrantable *Digression*) to such yong vnmaried Catholike Gentlewomen, who haue great portions left them by their Parents, and yet cannot be induced by this my small labour, nor by any other persuasions perhaps whatsoeuer, to enter into the state of a *Religious life*; but are absolutely, and immoueably resolued, to liue in the

world

world, in state of Lay persons. As also my pen here speaketh to such *Catholike Gentlewomen, and Ladyes of Worth and Dignity*, who aboud with affluency of rich estates, and remayne *Widdowes*, and therein haue full power to dispose at their pleasure of their Temporalities; and yet cannot be drawne (either through pretence of want of health, or greatnes of yeates, or through some other selfe conceited reasons) to spend the small remnant of their liues in a *Religious Course*. To you all of both these seuerall degrees, I direct these ensuing lynes: And hereby desire you all (then as you tender the good of your owne Soules) that if so you cannot brooke to be *Religious*, in profession, yet at least resolue to be *Religious*, in dispoſall of part of your temporall meanes. O what spirituall treasure, and riches might you hoard vp to your selues, by distributing to good vses a reasonable portion of your worldly treasure?

How many Young *Catholike Gentlewomen* are there in England, who most gladly thirst after a *Votary life*, and yet want sufficient portions for their Admittance into Religion? Here now is presented to you all, a large field wherein to sow your wheate: Here is presented a most aduantagious oportunity of making *Nunnes*, though your selues will not be *Nunnes*. My meaning is, that you would lay in wayte to further, and second by your most large Charity such *Poore Gentlewomen*, as would gladly take a *Religious Course*, and yet for want of meanes, are debarred from thence. Here were true

Charity, and here you might be iustly said to put your money out to Vsury, euen to God himselfe, according to those words: *Fœneratur Domino, qui miseretur pauperis: He, that hath mercy on the poore, putteth out his money to our Lord.*

Prouerb. 19.

Besides the state of these *Poore Gentlewomen* (whose temporall abilities are not proportionable and suitable to their Religious designes) I here also present to your Charitable view the state of some of our already setled *English Monasteries of Women*, who, resoluing to rely only vpon the prouidence of *God*, haue no certaine temporall reuenewes belonging to their Houses, but receaue all their maintenance and allowance from the Charity of well disposed Benefactours: Which Charities and Beneuolences (since they are meerely voluntarily given) do fall oftentimes short; so as the *Poore Blessed Women* suffer for the present some want.

Now here againe I say, is offered to you a second way of making spirituall interest of the superfluity of your states or riches: That is, if so out of true Christian Charity you would be pleased to open your purses largely, for the better reliefe of such *Vertuous Women*, (whose are both poore in *Spirit*, and poore in *State*) as willingly suffer these pressures, for the loue they beare to the true seruice of God. O how most acceptable would this your charity appeare in the sight of *God*, being bestowed either of the two wayes, (I meane) either for the furthering of those most vertuously disposed yong *Gentlewomen*, who want meanes for their procuring to enter into *Religion*, or for the

better

better relieuing of such *English Monasteries of Gentlemen*, who possesse no certaine proprieties, but only rely vpon the Charity of Benefactours, and other well disposed Almes-giues?

If it be most pleasing to God, and a worke meriting of Heauen, to dispose part of ones Goods and substance to such poore people, who here liue in the world, and commonly lead but sorry, yea dissolute liues, according to our Sauiours words deliuered without any reference to the liues of the poore: *Come you blessed of my Father, possesse you a Kingdome prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gaue me to eate; I was a thirsty, and you gaue me to drinke:* I say, if this kind of Almes giuen only promiscuosly to men, or women who are poore (notwithstanding their ill liues) be gratefull to *God*; How worthy then, how Christian-like, how meritorious, through Gods mercifull acceptance thereof, must that Charity, and Almes-deed appeare in the sight of the *Diuine Maiesty*, which is bestowed vpon the relieuing only of such blessed women, who either without such Charity cannot professe *a Religious life*, or who actually liuing in that most blessed state, do suffer some want & penury? No tongue of man or Angell can fully shew *Gods* acceptablenes of such a Charity. Why then, *Worthy Gentlewomen* (to whom I direct these my speaches) will any of you be so strait-laced, or so niggard, in forbearing to imploy a part of your substance vpon so fruitfull ground, as will affoard so great an harvest, and gaine to your Soules! Certainly you het-

Math. 25.

by become euen enemies to your owne seluer.

Diuers of you (as experience sheweth) are well content to bestow great, and vnnecessary charges vpon your apparell and attyre (and this sometimes aboue your states and calling) in like sort are ready now, and then to make needlesse iournies to *London*, to the exhausting from you of some hundred of pounds, fruitlessly spent. And can you then, be so indulgent to your bodies, and so rigorous to your Soules (the most noble and chiefest part of you) as to reserue little, or nothing for procuring your eternall Felicity? O turne the channell of these your wastfull expences, and let euery one of you adopt her owne *Soule*, as for her owne *Child*; My meaning is, that you would assaord *a Childs part* (at least) of your state and temporalities, to be giuen for the good of your Soule. A poore and niggardly imitation (*God knowes*) to prize your owne Soules at so little a worth, which Christ did buy and ransome at the high rate, of sheeding his most pretious bloud? And far short that your Charity is, from the Charity of *Zachaeus* who, as we read in the Ghospell, euen vpon his first sight of *our Sauiour*, *Gaue halfe of his Goods to the poore.*

Luc. 19.

Now, if so you resolue to bestow vpon your owne Soules only so much, as I here propose, where then with greater spiritual Interest, or vsury, can you place it, then vpon these *Vertuous women*, aboue by me expressed who both by day and night, will be euer ready to powre out the *Vealls of their Prayers*, be

for

re his diuine Goodnes, that he would vouch-
ase to protect you with his Grace, that in the
nd you may raigne with him in his celestiall
Kingdome for euer? Heere then, to speake
more particularly to you (*Great Catholike La-
dies, or Gentlewomen of Worth,*) who yet remaine
in state of your Widowhood; Now after the
death of your husbands, and before your se-
cond mariage, you may (if so your Charity be
answearable to *Gods* holy inspirations giuen
vnto you) euen (so to say) bring forth, & be-
come Mothers to many *Spirituall Daughters*; I
meane of many *Religious Women*, by distribu-
ting part of your temporall state vnto them.
And so your selues might be said (in a restray-
ned sense) to be become Religious persons by
your Substitutes. O that you would deeply
conceyue, of the great priuiledge, which you
enioy at this present. Therefore take aduan-
tage of the tyme, when tyme is, and this before
your second Mariage.

One most forcible Reason, for my fuller
persuading of you to this spirituall Charity.
shall be taken from the doctrine of *Purgatory*,
which you all (as being Catholikes) do fir-
mely beleeue. Now here you are to take into
your memory these three points following.
First, that the paynes of *Purgatory* (though en-
during but for certaine yeares) are most in-
supportable; of which paines *S. Austin* thus
writeth (as is aboue shewed in this Treatise.)
*The fyre of Purgatory (though it be not euerlasting)
yet it is passing grieuous; for it doth exceed all paynes
that man can suffer in this lyfe.*

Austin. l. de vera & falsa pœnitentia. ca 18.

Secondly,

Secondly, you are to call to mynd, that con-
sidering Gods Iustice (who punisheth th
least sinnes) euen the greatest Saints, as *S. A*
stin, S. Gregory, S. Bernard &c. haue stood
great feare and horrour of these paynes. I wi
content my selfe heere with repeating th
words of *S. Bernard* (a most eminent Saint,
by institution, Father of many Religio
Monkes) aboue related of this point, wh
thus meditateth hereof: *O would to God, some m*
aforehand would prouide for my head abundance
water, and for myne eyes a fountayne of teares; that
perhaps the burning fyre should take no hold, whe
running teares had cleansed before.

Bern. Serm. de Sex tribulat. cap. 16. & 55 in Cant.

Lastly, you cannot but know, that if men o
such extraordinary Holines, as these forme
Saints were, did stand in dread of the torme
of *Purgatory*; what is then the case of all you
who liue in the world in fulnes of pleasure
especially considering that *God* in his Iustic
will aske an account of euery idle word, much
more of bad Actions? How many of you d
wast, and rauell out seuerall yeares in vnne
cessary charges of apparell, in spending diuer
houres daily in adorning and triming vp you
bodies to be gazed vpon by men; and in diuer
other such vanities? As certaine, as *God* is *God*
so certaine it is, that you are to make satisfa
ction, either in this world, or in the next t
endure the fyre of *Purgatory*, for a designe
tyme, for the appeasing of *Gods Iustice* herein
Where then, is there any wit or iudgment in
such of you, who may redeeme your smalle
sinnes in this world, by your Almes-deeds

(fo

for thus we read the Prophet *Daniel* to say: *Redeeme thy sinnes with almes, and thyne iniquities with the mercy of the poore*) and yet will not, but resolue to pay all those debts in that raging and purging Fyre? Dan. 4.

Yf a man were indebted a *Thousand pounds*, and that were to be payed some very few yeares hence, and yet might redeeme the said debt by paying presently but one *Hundred pounds*, or lesse; would he not labour (if so he had any braynes) to procure the hundred pounds, though presently, for the redeeming of so far greater a debt? Your case is here the same. It is in your power to free your selues from the torments of *Purgatory* (at least to shorten the tyme of your sufferance there) by your great Charity, and Almes-deeds, now shewed in your life tyme. Yf you haue not the courage to part with some of your goods, whyles you liue, you must hereafter make infinitly a more grieuous satisfaction for your sinnes in *Purgatory*. Therefore become not vassalls and seruaues to your owne Riches; but distribute a good part of them to spirituall vses, and to the quenching of those hideous flames, which otherwise you are vnauoydably to endure. And if so you resolue to become friends to your owne Soules by practizing of Charity, and of relieuing such as most do need; you cannot more fruitfully lay out your Riches (as I said) then either in furthering of such yong *Vertuous Gentlewomen*, who gladly would leade a *Religious life*, and yet want temporall meanes for their

their placing them in that Course; or els ſe
the greater ſupply towards thoſe *English Mon*
ſteries beyond ſees, who ſtand in need thereof.

Thus far (worthy *Catholike Gentlewomen*, ma
Ladies) I haue thought good to proceede rec
exhorting you to ſuch truly Noble Acts ou
Chriſtian Charity. And with this my pen take iſſi
leaue of you. Only I cannot here forbeare nu
relate the vnworthy cuſtome of many world ec
ly (yet *Catholike*) *Parents*; who will be con oſ
tent moſt willingly to giue fifteene hundred to
or two thouſand pounds (and perhaps cu
much more) with one of their Daughters, iſſi
place her in mariage, and yet if the ſaid daugh irſ
ter reſolue to leade a votary, and vnmarie as y
lyſe, they will ſeeke to put her of into a *Mon* aie
ſtery, in beſtowing vpon her ſome three ead
toure hundred pounds at the moſt. Do no ten
ſuch Worldlings prefer a temporall Husban oul
before *Chriſt*? What Indignity (indeed wh eligi
Sacriledge) is this to the *Sauiour* of the world on
That a daughter muſt fare far worſe at he ma
Parents hands, becauſe ſhe had rather eſpou nd i
herſelfe to Chriſt, then to a mortall man? Bu r e
let ſuch Parents aſſure themſelues, that th iſh
their diſualewing of the ſeruice of God i nti
their Children, will hereafter be attended o
with dne puniſhments, anſwearable to the
preſent neglect, and ſmall reſpect they bear
to a *Religious and Spirituall life*.

Well my pen ſhall here ſtay it ſelfe fro
further diſcourſe; And ſhall take leaue of yo
all to whome this *Concluſion* is directed. He
then, for the laſt Cloſure of all I moſt humbl

beſeec

ſeech you (*Moſt vertuous and Religious Votaries*) that in regard of the Reuerend and worthy reſpect I beare to your moſt Bleſſed State manifeſted according to my ability in this precedent *Treatiſe*) you would vouchſafe me your daily prayers to the *Allmighty*, for the remiſſion of my Sinnes. You practiſe your continuall Charity in other your Actions: I beſeech you, extend the like Charity to this my moſt earneſt ſuyte. I ſpeake not this by way of forme, or ceremony (as many writers are accuſtomed to doe, wherewith to cloſe their *Epiſtles Dedicatory*:) Noe. It is truly a moſt earneſty deſire in me to haue ſuch *Bleſſed Soules* (as you are) to be Interceſſours to his *Diuine Maieſty*, in my behalfe, yet *Liuing* (or hereafter *dead*. My feeble, old, and languiſhing body, attended on with diuers infirmities, cannot hould out long; O pray then, (*You Charitable Religious Women*) that the tyme of my diſſolution may be moſt happy to my Soule; that ſo I may preſently after enioy the comfortable, and ineffable ſight of the moſt *Bleſſed Trinity* for euer. Thus in confidence of your accompliſhing this my Chriſtian deſire, I ceaſe, euer continuing

Your humble, and deuoted Seruant in Chriſt IESVS. N. N.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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John Crowther his book

June 11th 1806